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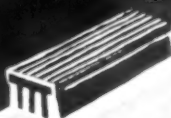
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# The Reading Teacher



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Developmental Reading in Schools and Colleges

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## Guest Editor

FOR THIS ISSUE is our indefatigable Paul Witty, professor of education and director of the Psycho-Educational Clinic at Northwestern University. Dr. Witty and his staff of writers have prepared a series of articles on developmental reading which ought to be most helpful to classroom teachers. He has been advocating the use of developmental reading in our schools for a long time. He asserts strongly that a developmental philosophy which provides continuity of growth from one stage of learning to the next should guide all instruction in our schools. His textbook for teachers, *READING IN MODERN EDUCATION*, which is based on a developmental approach, is based on experimental findings concerning child development and the nature and significance of language. He has always stressed the functional approach to the teaching of reading. His earlier book on reading, written in collaboration with David Kopel, has had much influence on the teaching of reading as have the many hundreds of books, monographs, and articles that have been coming from him.

The areas in which he has done intensive research are child development, mental hygiene, and reading. His studies on children's interests, education for the intellectually gifted children, education and television, and the teaching of reading, are all based on significant research studies, and for this reason anything he has to recommend for our boys and girls is well received.

He is general consultant of a popular series of basal readers. He is on the editorial staff of *MY WEEKLY READER*, *CHILDHOOD EDUCATION*, *STORY PARADE*, *JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY*, *JUNIOR LANGUAGE AND ARTS*, *JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL EDUCATION* and others. He is a consultant in the Office of Inter-American Affairs. He has been adviser to several South American countries on educational problems. As I write this, he is on an educational mission to Europe.

As you know, Dr. Witty has been a guiding light for your Council. He was president last year and holds the position of past-president now. He is always at the meetings of your executive board, most glad to help in any capacity he is asked.

A case study by Dr. Carter and Dr. McGinnis, of Western Michigan College, reveals many causes of poor reading and suggests remedial techniques. Dr. Robinson cites some research findings on children's interests and suggests ways to help them. Again Dr. Potter brings us up-to-date on what others are saying concerning the teaching of reading. Dr. Friedman has three book-reviews for those who are looking for professional books.

The April journal will discuss some of the controversial issues in the teaching of reading. Dr. LaVerne Strong, of the Connecticut State Department of Education, will serve as guest editor. Be on the look-out for some very heated discussions.

J. ALLEN FIGUREL, Editor



*And Now...*

To Introduce the Feature Theme:

## *Developmental Reading in Schools and Colleges*

*M*ANY STUDENTS believe that education should be regarded as a process in which the greatest development of every boy and girl is sought according to his unique nature and needs. Paralleling this concept, "developmental reading" has gradually replaced older concepts of the reading process. At one time, it was held that the child first "learned to read and later read to learn". Today educators insist that reading experiences for every boy and girl should be meaningful from the beginning. At the high school level, too, reading instruction should continue to be meaningful and should seek to satisfy interests and fulfill needs.

In the FORTY-SEVENTH YEARBOOK OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION (1), the writer of this article pointed out that reading experience should help the high school pupil: (a) appreciate and understand various kinds of materials in diverse subject areas, (b) gain a better understanding of himself and his personal environment, (c) achieve a more adequate understanding of his social environment, and (d) acquire deeper satisfactions, enjoyment, and escape through reading.

Schools today, too, are giving increased attention to the role of the interest factor in promoting efficient reading. Perhaps the most conspicuous interest of children and youth at the present time is television. Research shows that pupils in the elementary school spend on the average more than 20 hours per week televising while the average for high school students is between 14 and 17 hours. Studies show little relationship between hours spent televising and success in school work. Nor is there a marked relationship between the amount of televising and intelligence. Moreover, since the advent of TV, the amount of reading done by pupils has been altered little on the average. Some studies (2) suggest that about one-third of certain groups of pupils read less. Yet there are some pupils who are reading more. These pupils may be those in whom strong interests associated with TV have been extended and deepened by association with books.

*It has of course been demonstrated that a reading program designed to satisfy interests may foster efficiency in learning. By the association of reading experience with children's preferred activities, greater skill as well as greater enjoyment of reading may develop. However, the aim of a developmental reading program is not only to satisfy interests and promote skill in reading, but it is also designed to fulfill "developmental needs." When such needs are satisfied, happiness and welfare may be enhanced; when they are blocked or denied, fulfillment, unhappiness, and maladjustment frequently result.*

*For many years, the writer and his associates have believed that children referred as problems to the Psycho-Educational Clinic at Northwestern University would be best understood by studying their behavior in relationship to basic human needs. This approach has proved effective in dealing with various types of cases sent to the Clinic regardless of whether the referral has been because of reading difficulty, personality maladjustment, or some other problem. After a child has been carefully studied, reading experiences are often recommended to satisfy needs. The list of "derived needs," used in the Clinic, resembles the lists of "developmental tasks" set forth by other investigators (3).*

*It is recognized that the simple act of reading will not necessarily alter or improve a child's behavior or attitude. But when such reading is judiciously introduced and accompanied by appropriate discussion and related experience it may prove decidedly beneficial. Case studies (4) certainly justify this conclusion.*

*Not only in dealing with problem cases is this approach helpful. It may also be used to advantage with typical pupils in regular classrooms (5). But the extent and nature of the changes which may be brought about in groups or classes through the use of books in this way need to be more thoroughly investigated. Research revealing positive values from this approach, at the present time, is limited largely to case-studies (6). But the data are nonetheless impressive and significant.*

*Many school people believe that the future will bring a greater recognition of the significance of the developmental approach in education and a widespread initiation of developmental reading programs in our schools. The concept of developmental reading will be broad and will embrace at least these four significant aspects:—*

- 1. The programs will be developmental in that they will give each pupil a chance to progress successfully from whatever level he may have attained in each grade throughout the course of his education. Accordingly, reading instruction will not be discontinued after the sixth grade is completed—a practice too frequently found in our schools, but will extend throughout the secondary school with subsequent attention as needed.*

2. The programs will be developmental in a sense that they will provide opportunities to master the particular skills required to meet pupils' emerging needs for reading as they progress throughout the course of their education.

3. They will be developmental in their attempt to satisfy, extend, and enrich worthwhile interests.

4. Finally such programs will seek to offer effective help in the fulfillment of developmental needs or "developmental tasks" as they arise.

In this issue of *THE READING TEACHER* several articles are presented which relate to the four phases of a developmental reading program. Donald Cleland emphasizes the significance of skills and suggests some ways to foster improvement in reading instruction. Dorothy C. Estabrook discusses some of the procedures employed by a primary grade teacher in studying and utilizing children's interests. Phyllis Bland describes one high school's effort to initiate a developmental reading program while Willard Abraham treats certain problems in reading arising among college students and suggests ways to meet them. Finally, Samuel Weingarten discusses some values of books in meeting certain developmental needs of junior college students. We believe that these articles will be of interest and value to all who seek to improve instruction and engender interest in reading.

PAUL WITTY, Guest Editor.

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## The Significance of Developmental Reading Skills

by DONALD L. CLELAND

● UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

GOETHE, the German poet, dramatist, and philosopher, expressed a concept of developmental reading over a hundred years ago when he said: "The dear people do not know how long it takes to learn to read. I have been at it all my life and I cannot yet say that I have reached the goal."

From this quotation we infer that Goethe considered learning to read a life-long goal. Another inference we can draw is that the art or skill of reading is not an innate or inherent ability; it is an acquired form of behavior. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that a child must receive instruction and guidance while he is learning to read. In spite of the fact that the concept of developmental reading did not emerge in recent times, we still find many teachers who cling to the belief that formal reading instruction should terminate at the end of the sixth grade. Unfortunately, this belief or practice is the cause, directly or indirectly, of many reading failures in junior high schools, senior high schools, and colleges. While an understanding of learning to read as a developmental process will not, *per se*, be insurance against reading failures, it should contribute to a sound preventive program.

What is developmental reading? An analysis of research and literature on reading would lead us to the following general conclusions:<sup>1</sup>

- Growth in reading ability, considered as a whole, is continuous and more or less equally paced from the primary school through college.
- The rate of progress varies widely among groups and individuals.
- Whereas practically all major reading attitudes and skills function from the beginning, they mature at different times.
- Growth in the elementary school is most prominent in those aspects of recognition, comprehension, and speed which underlie all reading activities.
- Growth is most prominent at the high school and college level in the more mature types of interpretation, critical reaction, and integration involved in efficient reading.

Developmental reading is tuned to the various needs of children as they mature physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. It is a sequential development of skills: each newly needed skill is built upon skills previously acquired.

Let us, then, condense twelve years of formal reading instruction and guidance that Joe Brown received into the time it takes an average adult reader to read the remaining part of this article.

<sup>1</sup>*Reading in High School and College*, Forty-seventh Yearbook of The National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, Page 41.

### **Readiness Program**

Joe Brown was six years and six months old when he started to school. An intelligence test revealed that he was an average boy, but a reading-readiness test indicated that he needed instruction in some of the phases of reading-readiness. Miss Smith aided him in developing visual and auditory discrimination; she took Joe and his classmates on many trips and excursions, thereby increasing his and their experiential background and building a large hearing and understanding vocabulary. She read stories to him and his classmates and this contributed, also to his and their hearing and understanding vocabulary.

He learned to work and play cooperatively with other children, thereby gaining stature emotionally and socially. He helped to care for the pets; he made useful toys; he helped with various projects, thereby receiving training in problematic thinking. All through these activities Miss Smith nurtured and cultivated his desire to learn to read. The results of a second reading-readiness test, the anecdotal records and Miss Smith's judgment indicated that Joe was ready for his first reading lesson.

### **Experience Chart Reading**

To effect a smooth transition from reading readiness to the reading of the first pre-primer, Miss Smith used the experience chart approach. She gathered the class together and told them that they were going on the school bus to a nearby farm. She told them that they would see many farm

animals and that they should try to remember the names of the animals. She told them about a little brook that ran through the pasture and that if they would look closely they might see some strange animals in the brook. The children were very much pleased when she told them that as soon as they got back she would help them write a story about the trip.

As soon as they got back from the trip Miss Smith had each child tell about things he saw. Joe was most enthusiastic about the milking machine and his contribution centered about milking time. Other children told about the cows, and some told about the crab they had seen in the brook.

A story was written about the trip. Joe and his classmates helped Miss Smith write the story on the chalkboard. As soon as the story was written, they all read it together as Miss Smith ran her hand under the words they were reading.

The next day Joe and his classmates noticed that Miss Smith had prepared two charts and that both of them had words on them just like the words they had seen on the chalkboard the day before. Again the children read the story as Miss Smith ran her hand under the words they were reading. Miss Smith took the other chart and cut it up into strips. She gave a strip to Joe and asked him to place it on the other chart under the words that looked just like the words on the strip. They all thought this was fun and each one eagerly waited his turn. Miss Smith then cut some of the strips into smaller pieces and Joe and



his classmates would match the work on the strip with as many other words they could find on the big chart.

Joe and his classmates made many other trips. When they returned, they would help Miss Smith write a story about the things they saw. Miss Smith controlled the vocabulary of the charts as much as possible and soon the children had acquired a sight vocabulary of about fifty words. The children were then ready for their first pre-primer.

#### **Reading Primers, First, Second, and Third Readers**

The big day arrived—the day when Joe would have an opportunity to read in his first real book. He was surprised to find that the printing in the book looked very much like the printing Miss Smith had put on the chalkboard and on the charts. Joe read the first page and he wanted to read more but Miss Smith said that his classmates wanted to read also. Joe thought it was just like playing games, you had to take your turn. All the children in his group had a chance to read and they were all so proud to know that they had read from a real book.

Joe was learning other things. He learned that his name began with the same sound as Jane's and Jack's name. He also noticed that his name and "go" sounded pretty and then Miss Smith said that when words sound the same at the end they rhyme. Miss Smith knew that Joe and his classmates were ready for phonetic analysis. She gave them many exer-

cises that developed auditory perception or ear-training.

When Joe had finished reading the pre-primers, he had acquired a stock of approximately 75 sight words. Miss Smith noted that Joe had good auditory perception and that he had acquired some skill in visual-auditory perception. She knew that he had acquired a phonetic readiness and therefore guided and instructed him in some of the rudiments of phonics. Joe and his classmates continued to go on trips; Miss Smith would read stories to them and they would talk about the trips and stories, sometimes using the new words she had pronounced.

In spite of the fact that Miss Smith had been developing phonetic readiness, had been building a sight or recognition vocabulary, and had been increasing their hearing or understanding vocabulary, she had not lost sight of the ultimate goal of all reading—the interpretation of the printed page. She realized that unless Joe and his classmates got more from the printed page than they took to it, no reading or interpretation was actually taking place. And so, through all the primary grades Miss Smith was instructing and guiding Joe and his classmates in the development and refinement of the following comprehension skills:

- Reading to understand and follow directions
- Reading to follow a sequence of events in a story
- Reading to skim
- Reading to get the general significance

- Reading to comprehend the main thought
- Reading to evaluate
- Reading for appreciation

By the end of third grade, Joe and his classmates had acquired considerable skill in attacking independently words that were in their hearing or understanding vocabulary. He could divide two and three syllable words into syllables and could associate the proper sound with each syllable. He learned to verify his generalizations through contextual clues; that is, he asked himself, "Does the sentence make sense?" He could build new words by adding suffixes and prefixes. In fact, all through these three years Joe had grown mentally, emotionally, and socially as well as physically. His growth in reading skills had been most rapid in grades two and three.

Joe and his classmates were also going through another readiness period—learning the letters of the alphabet, acquiring visual-auditory perception, and recognizing the syllabic divisions of two and three syllable words. Actually, this was a dictionary-readiness period. Specifically, gaining competence in the comprehension skills previously mentioned was a readiness program for his next big adventure—the intermediate grades.

### **Reading in the Intermediate Grades**

Joe quickly found that he must do more reading than he did in the primary grades. At first he seemed lost for it was such a big jump from third to fourth grade. But he found that his

new teacher, Miss Black, was very sympathetic and seemed to understand what a nine-year-old boy was like. He found so many interesting things in his books—stories about science, history and geography. Miss Black noted that he liked to read stories about our national heroes, but she encouraged him to read other books. Many times Joe envisioned himself walking along beside the heroes of the west; he imagined himself as a great scientist, a football hero, or a great pilot. When Miss Black called his name he would be startled to find himself in the classroom. Miss Black never got angry when he lost himself in these flights—she understood boys; that is why he liked her, he said.

Not only did Joe and his classmates learn new reading skills, but the skills he had learned in the primary grades were being refined. More and more reading as a thinking process was being refined. Joe was reading critically, evaluating material in light of his previous experience. He found it more difficult to use some of the comprehension skills he had used so efficiently in the primary grades—the sentences were longer and more complex; the vocabulary was more difficult, and each subject seemed to have its own special list of words; the concepts were more abstract.

Miss Black gave Joe and his classmates a dictionary and not only did she show them how to use it, she set good models of dictionary usage. Joe found that it was handy, especially when he could not figure out the meaning of a word he had never heard before. And many times he would use

the dictionary to find out if he had guessed the correct meaning of the word by reading the rest of the sentence.

Joe and his classmates acquired a facility in the use of the following skills that was commensurate with the demands of the reading situation and the difficulty of the material:

- Skimming to discover a specific fact or facts
- Reading to grasp the general idea of significance of a selection. (A prerequisite to many of the more complex reading skills)
- Reading to predict subsequent ideas or events
- Reading to organize a selection into several main ideas and dependent ideas under each of these.
- Reading to reach some generalization or conclusion
- Interpretation of maps, graphs and other pictorial material
- Reading to understand a sequence of ideas or events
- Developing an appreciation for and a permanent interest in good literature
- Reading to appraise the value of ideas presented
- Reading to verify facts given

Joe and his classmates were improving their mechanics of reading. Their silent rate of reading had exceeded their oral rate; they were establishing the habit of reading different materials at different rates; they were learning the meaning of many of the common prefixes and suffixes and

of root words; they could attack unknown words with greater facility; and had established the habit of referring to the dictionary more frequently.

Miss Black had helped Joe and his classmates develop an acceptable attitude toward reading. They found that if they had a purpose in reading, remembering what they read was much easier. Some of the reasons for which Joe and his classmates read are:

- To solve problems in arithmetic
- To follow printed directions for construction work
- To find answers to questions
- To form an opinion
- To evaluate material
- To verify opinions and facts
- To satisfy curiosity
- For sheer enjoyment
- To broaden interests

Joe and his classmates found that the purpose for which they read determined, to a large extent, the materials they would use. In spite of the fact that Miss Black had many interesting books on a special table in the back of the room, Joe and his classmates had to go to the library many times. They soon learned where certain books would be found, how to use the various reference books, and had gained some facility in using the card catalogues.

Joe and his classmates had gone a long way in acquiring reading skills that aided them in the intermediate grades. But they eagerly awaited a new adventure—the junior and senior high school.

### Reading in the Junior and the Senior High Schools

Joe had learned in the elementary school that words have different meanings, but he suddenly realized during his first year in junior high school that words have a specific meaning only in context. Outside of context, they may have several meanings. This knowledge prompted Joe to make a study of certain words—new words that he met in his readings. He found it was easier to remember the meaning of a new word if he would find synonyms for it, if he would learn many of its connotations and if he would make a mental note of the word's derivation. This also helped him to learn more suffixes, prefixes and root words.

Although Joe and his classmates had learned and had acquired some facility with most of the comprehension skills, there were times when the material proved to be a challenge. He found that if he could determine the conditions under which an article or a poem was written, the reason for which it was written, the authors purpose in writing it, the article or poem seemed to grow in significance. Many times he had heard one of his classmates recite "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address" and once he had memorized it. When he learned more about the Civil War, and studied about Lincoln's pledge to save the union, the address seemed to say so much more. Joe had achieved a greater depth of understanding of one of the great pieces of literature.

Joe and his classmates learned that

each of the subject areas presented particular difficulties. Some of the common difficulties were: vocabularies, metaphorical expressions, sentence length and complexity, and abstractness of some of the concepts. They found, however, that each of the subject teachers was best qualified to help them solve the difficulties they encountered. In other words, Joe thought, each of my teachers is a special reading teacher.

Joe also found that the demands made upon his reading were more complex in high school. In the elementary school, he knew he could get by if he would just remember what the article or author said. Now he had to do more thinking and reasoning. In order to interpret fully what the author wished the reader to get, Joe noted that he had to do the following:

- Understand the author's purpose in writing the article, that is, was he trying to persuade, entertain, be humorous, or just presenting the facts and leaving the rest to the reader.
- Recognize the nature of the passage.
- Read the preface. (He remembers reading Kate Seredy's *The White Stag*. He had accepted it as absolutely factual until his teacher had called his attention to the preface.)
- Note the inferences purposely left unsaid for effect.
- Had to understand the situation under which an article was written.
- Perhaps consult a similar treatise by a different author.



The librarian had helped Joe and his friends gain considerable independence in reading. He could use the card catalogues efficiently, the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, the Encyclopedias, and the various indexes.

All through high school Joe was refining and developing the skills he had learned in the elementary school. He was building vocabulary and background concepts; he was gaining independence in reading; he was developing an interest in and an appreciation for good literature; he was developing and refining his reading techniques and skills; he was establishing the habit of reading different materials at a rate that suited the demands of the situation; and more and more he was realizing that reading was a thinking process.

You have thus been carried with Joe and his friends through twelve years of formal schooling. Time did not permit us to examine all reading situations and the demands made upon reading skills. Learning to read is a life-long process; it is not an inherent or innate ability. A child must learn to read by his own efforts—the reading process must be attacked actively by the child, and, the child must receive instruction and guidance while he is learning to read. And finally, what is a good concept of developmental reading? I quote again from the FORTY-SEVENTH YEARBOOK OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION . . . “Whereas practically all major attitudes and skills function from the beginning, they mature at different times.”

• • •

## **Reading in Second Grade Can Be Enjoyable and Rewarding**

by DOROTHY C. ESTABROOK  
● JANE STENSON SCHOOL  
SKOKIE, ILLINOIS

**I**N THIS PAPER a teacher in a second grade of a public elementary school will attempt to describe a reading program which resulted not only in marked academic gains for her pupils, but also in a greater appreciation of the value of books. Important factors in this program were the maintenance of a wholesome classroom atmosphere and the establishment of friendly, dynamic relations between the home and the school.

### **Description of the Community**

The school is located in a rapidly growing village near Chicago. At present the population is approximately 20,000. It is a community of home owners. It does not have a slum area. Factories are of the spreading, one-story type with large, well-tended lawns in front. Many of the business organizations are engaged in research and in developmental work. The type



of industry necessitates the employment of large numbers of men and women with college degrees.

The village offers unusual opportunities for creative living. Most of the homes have spacious grounds where children may play safely. In addition, public playgrounds are maintained during the summer months. A large proportion of the parents have sufficient income and leisure to provide the essentials for good mental and physical health for their families. They join their children in recreational activities. In many instances, an entire family derives pleasure from active participation in such cultural areas as art and music. Families "do things" together. They work as a unit to keep the village attractive in appearance by means of well-kept gardens and lawns and by artistic landscaping. Many of the children have their own small gardens which they tend. They also assume responsibility for the care of their pets.

Parents and children often enjoy special outings, picnics, and sports together. And the villagers also maintain active memberships in such civic organizations as churches, the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, women's clubs, boy scouts, girl scouts, and the Parent-Teacher Association. While most of the homes have television and radio sets, the time spent in watching and listening does not outweigh hours spent in creative activities.

The village is unusual in that each school district has its own seven-man board of education, its own superintendent, and its own school tax. Each

superintendent works directly with the board to which he is responsible. The school is an important interest in each community.

The superintendent, with the full cooperation of his teaching staff, has established what he calls an "Open-Door Policy"—the door of the school is always open to parents; likewise the door of the home is always open to teachers. In this way the home and the school cooperate for the good of the children and for the community.

To an elementary school in this young, enterprising village, the writer was assigned as a teacher in the second grade. According to the educational philosophy to which she had subscribed, she must adapt her teaching to the needs and interests of her pupils. She was eager to know her children before school began. How could she utilize a part of her vacation in becoming acquainted with them?

### **New Teacher Contacts**

#### **Homes First**

She finally decided upon this approach to the solution of her problem. She prepared a form letter, a copy of which she sent to each parent. In this letter she expressed her desire to meet her prospective pupils and their families before school began in September. She requested that the parents inform her either by telephone or by letter the time at which she could conveniently visit them in their home. The parents responded promptly and with enthusiasm to her proposal. Dates were set for home visits during the months of July and August. Whenever possible, the visit was made in

the evening when the father could be present.

During the visit she presented a copy of Form V of the *Diagnostic Child Study Record*; "Home Information Report" to the parents.<sup>1</sup> This report provides space for the parents to answer questions concerning the child's developmental history. While the parents were engaged in filling in this report for her, she herself asked questions of the child concerning his interests and activities. She made appropriate notations on a form devised for this purpose.<sup>2</sup> Before taking leave of the parents, the teacher requested a small photograph of the child.

Later at her own home, she reviewed the incidents of the visit and made tentative plans for the guidance of each child according to the needs and interests that she had discovered. She recorded her findings along with her outlined plans of procedure for each prospective pupil whose home she had visited. She filed this material in folders, one folder for each child.

Thus the teacher came to know each child as an individual before he entered her classroom in the fall. When she met her pupils on the opening day of school, she was able to greet each one as a friend she had already met. The children returned the gesture of friendliness and interest. They were alert and eager to get started on the year's work.

### **Uses Other Means to Learn More About Pupils**

As the year proceeded, other ways were used for becoming further acquainted with every child—observing him in the classroom, on the playground, in the cafeteria, and while on excursions. She accordingly was able to form impressions of him as an individual, as a member of his family group, and as a member of his class at school. She often observed the child when he was engaged in free play, seemingly unaware that he was being watched. In this manner, she often found hidden talents in a pupil.

During the home visit the initial step had been taken by the teacher in establishing pleasant rapport between school and home. These cordial relations were maintained throughout the year. The parent frequently made a friendly visit to the school; the teacher was often a welcome guest at tea or at dinner in the home. The teacher and the parents took these opportunities to share information concerning the child in order to help him gain maximum benefits from his school and home activities. In this way a continuing friendship was formed; this relationship made it easier for the teacher to fulfill her educational mission successfully. The teacher felt free to turn to the parents for assistance or counsel in connection with classroom projects or problems.

One afternoon during the first month of school, the mothers were invited to a tea in the second grade classroom. Each mother was given a card with

<sup>1</sup>Paul A. Witty, David Kopel, and Ann Coomer. *Diagnostic Child Study Record* in six forms. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Psycho-Educational Clinic.

<sup>2</sup>Form VI, "Pupil Report of Interests and Activities" of *Diagnostic Child Study Record*.

her name and that of her child typed on it which she pinned on her dress, thus enabling mothers she had not met before to address her correctly and to become acquainted with her.

At this afternoon meeting, the teacher outlined her goals for the year. She emphasized the importance of maintaining both at home and at school an atmosphere in which every child could feel he was necessary to the welfare and happiness of the group; where he could not only find satisfactions in achievement, but also where he could have freedom to experiment and to make mistakes. The teacher warned against the practices of comparing one child unfavorably with another child; and of insisting upon the attainment of unrealistic goals. And she reminded the mothers that most human beings respond better to praise than to criticism. She also pointed out the importance of recognizing and respecting the individual differences in children. She called attention to the fact that each child grows and develops according to his own innate rhythm and rate, that children learn to walk, to talk, to spell, and to read at different ages and at various rates.

For some of the mothers this plan of procedure was somewhat new and thought-provoking. All of them, however, agreed to co-operate on the program for the year. Informal get-togethers for the parents were held in the classroom at least once a month—sometimes in the afternoon and sometimes in the evening. In addition to these informal meetings, conferences between the teacher and each parent

were held every two months. At this time, each parent was given a fifteen-minute period (scheduled at a certain date and hour beforehand) to discuss the child's progress during the interval between conferences. These teacher-parent evaluations of the child's educational, mental, physical, and social growth took the place of the issuance of traditional report cards. Some of the fathers took time from their work to attend these conferences at school.

In her enthusiastic recital, the teacher does not want her reader to forget that she was permitted by her superintendent to interpret his "Open-Door Policy" in her own individual way. She, too, worked in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and acceptance created by the superintendent, board, and faculty members. Mothers shared information and interest concerning all the boys and the girls in the school and were willing to offer helpful suggestions regarding pupils other than their own.

### **Teacher Prepares Special Experience Charts**

From the information obtained from the parents and the child during the home visit, the teacher prepared before the opening day of school, an illustrated experience chart for each child. These charts were based on the expressed interests, likes and dislikes, and on the narrated experiences of each boy and girl interviewed. At the top of the chart was a colored picture cut from a magazine and chosen by the teacher because of its having some resemblance to the child. The teacher had a snapshot of each child which the

parent had given her to guide in selecting pictures. The magazine picture was mounted and pasted on a large chart; underneath the picture was printed an experience which the child had had during the summer. Charts of more difficult reading material were prepared for those children who had expressed satisfaction and pleasure in reading and who had used a varied and rich vocabulary in conversation.

The children were surprised and delighted to find on their classroom walls on the first day of school pictures and stories about themselves. Even the more timid boys and girls forgot their shyness and were eager to read their own stories and also the stories of their classmates. They soon discovered that reading to get an idea or a thought is quite different from just calling words from a book.

This reading experience in second grade gave each child a feeling of accomplishment. He also became interested in his neighbor's activities of the summer. The gifted pupils enjoyed these charts as much as the average and the slow-learners. All shared their vacation experiences by reading to one another and by discussing further the books each child had read.

The charts not only served as a means to stimulate interest in reading and self-expression through conversation, but they were also a means of developing desirable character traits. Through the reading and the discussion of the charts the children learned:

- that individuals differ in interests and in abilities

- that one should recognize his own abilities
- that one should respect the abilities of others
- that it is a satisfying and a rewarding experience to participate in a group activity
- that everyone has emotions of anger, jealousy, hate, love, fear, and excitement, and that such emotions are normal
- that through shared experiences, through friendly discussions, through laughter and fun, one often eliminates fear or anger

The chart reading was later supplemented with the reading of flash cards which duplicated the words found on the charts. Each child was given a pack of cards containing words and phrases. Games were played in which different children matched words and phrases on each other's charts.

After most of the children had acquired a stock of these words and phrases, the following game was introduced to the class:

### Word Games Are Used

The *Magic Eye Word Board*, devised by Sister Bertrand of St. John's School for the Deaf, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is the basis for a game to be played by a small group of children. The board has places for eighteen words. Cards with eighteen different words are given to the players. As the player fastens his card to its proper place on the board, he pronounces the word. When the board is filled, each of two children takes a wire in his hand and a third child, familiar with



all the words, manages the control wire. The third child calls a word, and touches the control while the two players try to see which one can touch the word with his wire first. As soon as the correct word is touched, the "Magic Eye" shines. The "eye" on the left of the machine flashes green and the one on the right flashes red. The children keep score and watch the game eagerly. The "Magic Eye Game" can be adapted to many purposes. Meanings can be matched to words, and relationships between words can be emphasized.

#### **Projects and Other Activities Are Correlated with Basic Readers**

During the school year the children are encouraged to read both for information and for recreation. An examination of the Interest Inventories of the children revealed that most of them enjoyed stories about farms and farm animals. A farm project was selected by the group. A miniature farm was constructed of paper and wood. Simply written books about farms and farm animals were selected and brought to class by the pupils, by the teacher, and by the librarian. Many and varied were the stories and discussions enjoyed by the class. Films and film readers were employed too, and the whole program was correlated with basal readers and workbooks.

Later in the school year, the children noticed unusual birds and wanted to know more about them. A com-

mittee on birds was formed and these children collected books about birds. The committee read for information and reported to the class their findings.

At one time, another group of children expressed a desire to make cookies for a class party. This group read recipes and cook books. They discussed what they had found in their reading materials and finally selected a recipe to follow in making the cookies. In addition to committee reading, many books were read just for fun.

These experiences were not only satisfying to the pupils, but as they were used, in association with systematic instruction and emphasis on skills, they led to great gains in reading efficiency. These gains were clearly demonstrated by standard test results and by the pupils' increased competency in independent reading.

#### **Have Your Dues Expired?**

Members whose dues expired December 1954 should renew them immediately, otherwise they will not get the remaining issues for the year. Send check or money order (\$2.50) to Donald L. Cleland, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, The Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania. (If you belong to a Local Council, send dues to your Local Treasurer.)



## A High School Developmental Reading Program

by PHYLLIS BLAND

● READING CONSULTANT

EVANSTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

FOR MANY YEARS the language arts program at the Evanston Township High School has offered courses in remedial English for below average or low average students. Superior students have also been given special considerations in regular or honor classes. This program, although helpful, did not provide adequately for guidance and training in reading. The administration of the school, under the direction of Dr. Lloyd Michael, its principal, recognizing the need for a more adequate program of reading instruction established the first reading clinic for the school and adopted a developmental reading program which would provide not only remedial and individual instruction for certain students but also guidance in reading for the rest of the students so that all of them might have the opportunities of developing further the many complex reading skills which are required in a modern high school.

Under the guidance of Dr. Paul Witty, of the Psycho-Educational Clinic at Northwestern University, the program was expanded to include: (1) careful diagnosis of the reading needs of each student, (2) systematic instruction in small classes, (3) the use of diversified materials and activities designed to satisfy and extend interests, (4) conditions conducive to enjoyment of reading and the develop-

ment of suitable attitudes, and (5) articulation of the reading program with efforts to improve reading skills within each classroom.

To understand and to satisfy the needs of each student, the reading consultant works closely with the home-room directors, the librarians, and the directors of the health center and the guidance department. On occasion, she discusses problems with the school psychologist and the social-psychiatric workers, and obtains helpful data through discussion of the problems with parents.

### Four Types of Instruction Are Given

The full-time reading consultant serves as a regular member of the English department and is provided the time and materials essential for use with pupils needing help in reading. Four types of reading instruction are offered: (1) remedial classes called *English Reading*, as a substitute for regular freshman English; (2) skill classes for upperclassmen; (3) individual work for students having special problems; and (4) accelerated reading classes for good readers who seek further improvement.

### English Reading Classes

Freshmen whose entrance tests indicate the greatest discrepancy between scholastic aptitude and reading

performance are assigned to an *English Reading* class which meets five times during each week throughout the year and yields one unit of English credit.

During the first three weeks of this class, the reading of very easy, interesting materials offers students an opportunity to succeed. At this time, the consultant confers with pupils and assembles essential test data regarding each student.

Early in the course the students cooperate in many activities including the selection and arrangement of books in the classroom. Colorful chalkboard and bulletin displays are planned and books are selected for the classroom library by committees. The Encyclopaedia Britannica film *Better Reading* is shown and the study of booklets such as *You Can Read Better* and *Streamline Your Reading* is introduced.

This is followed by the administration of a class-made examination over the material covered in the pamphlets and a self-analysis of each student's needs is made. The results are evaluated in personal conferences designed to set each pupil's goals for reading improvement.

To make this orientation unit an active part of the students' experience, the class is allotted a week in which to plan activities and to illustrate or dramatize the reading skills. Students make posters and prepare radio and TV scripts. For example, a TV script entitled *What's My Trouble?* featured guests with reading problems who presented questions and received answers such as these:

BILL: "I have trouble with oral reading. How can I improve?"

TERRY: "Bill, will you please read a paragraph from this book?"

BILL: "I'd be glad to." (Bill reads poorly.)

TERRY: "Thank you, Bill. I think the panel can tell you how to improve your reading. Pat, do you have a suggestion?"

PAT: "I think that Bill would be a good oral reader if he'd read by groups of words instead of one at a time."

TERRY: "Carol, what do you think?"

CAROL: "Bill, did you understand what you just read?"

BILL: "Yes, I think so."

CAROL: "Well, let's be sure. What did you read?"

BILL: "Uh-h-hh. I guess I don't know."

MARY: "I think I can give Bill a hint. Reading is like music. When you play one note at a time like this (background music of a student playing a violin), you don't get the rhythm or the melody. The same is true if you *word* read. You don't get the ideas from what you are reading. *But* if you play the notes in groups like *this* (music), you start to get an idea, or an impression of what you're hearing. If you *read* by groups of words, the meaning begins to come through to you. Now, if you play the musical bars together like this (music), you can recognize the theme, or the name, of the melody. When you read, you can understand the

main ideas by reading phrases and by looking for key words and topic sentences."

PAT: "Here's another hint, Bill. You practice this way for about 15 to 30 minutes a day on easy and interesting material and you'll find that you'll improve enough to read more difficult material without any trouble understanding it."

TERRY: "Panel, meet our next guest, Joyce Crain. Joyce, would you like to tell the panel your problem?"

JOYCE: "I haven't a real problem, but I would like to ask the panel how fast I should read my homework."

DON: "Joyce, do you drive a car?"

JOYCE: "Yes, I do."

DON: "Well, reading is similar to driving a car. You adjust your speed to your purposes."

JOYCE: "I don't think I follow you."

DON: "Then think of it this way. If you were traveling in a downtown section of the city where it was difficult to drive, you would slow down. The same is true when you read a hard assignment in science or history. However, if you read a short story for English, or something easier than history or science, you can speed-up just as you would if you were driving through a side street in the suburban part of town."

PAT: "Say, Don, you forgot something—you should tell her that she can read as fast as she wants to with very easy material or for skimming any kind of material."

MARY: "I can think of another way that driving is like reading. You have to keep your eye on the road when you are driving just as you have to keep your mind on what you're reading."

PAT: "There's another similarity, Joyce. You have to watch your traffic signals on the road just as you have to pay attention to punctuation marks."

Additional questions are related to vocabulary, study skills, and programs for individual improvement. This script was tape-recorded and sent to other classes to be used as an introduction to *Streamline Your Reading* and to discussions of reading improvement. The tape recorder is used frequently throughout the year in activities such as the evaluation of oral reading.

For practice on easy and interesting materials, Friday is reserved for free reading and for oral book reviews. Book games are also used to encourage interest. A book game devised by this year's classes is called Reading Targets. The slogan, "Aim to Read More Books," is posted above a red and white target with a black "book's-eye" in the center. The target is divided into sections to include books on sports, teen-age problems, mystery, adventure, and so forth. The rules of the game state that each player must read four books before his arrow makes a book's-eye. After the books are reviewed on 3 by 5 index cards, credit is given for the number of pages read. In these games there is a greater effort to encourage students to develop balanced reading programs.

Another activity planned around promoting enjoyable reading is the making of a class-edited magazine featuring students' book reviews, poems, short stories, cross-word puzzles, and work of art. Class editors select the material first because of its originality. Later they check grammar, spelling, and sentence structure.

### **Study Habits Are Extensively Treated**

Study habits are extensively treated in this course. Science Research Associate's pamphlet, *Study Your Way Through School* is used. Textbooks from freshman courses in social studies and science provide the basis for practice in skimming, outlining, summarizing, attending to technical vocabulary, and reading to satisfy the purpose of an assignment. Such practical application of the skills acquired in the reading class promotes improvement of reading in the content areas. Supplementary texts and materials are suggested for the students who need very easy reading material.

Interest in words is developed by studying the history of some new, unusual words. Spelling, syllabification, and the use of the dictionary are also stressed. Competitive games are devised to perfect phonic skills; these games are enjoyed greatly by the group. Students who need special work in word recognition and word attack skills are given individual assistance.

Class units which focus on the interests and problems of teen-agers offer additional opportunities for students to plan activities. One such class unit, called *Teenascope*, was devel-

oped by the *English Reading* classes. The class reading in this unit was divided into four areas of need:—(1) to foster a better understanding of oneself; (2) to understand other teen-agers; (3) to appreciate adults; and (4) to choose a career. The class activities included: research by a committee from each area, panel discussions, lectures by guest speakers, evaluations of each unit, and the preparation of a class-edited magazine. The magazine, called *Teenascope*, presented the class notes from the panel discussions, original poems, short stories based on teen-age problems, and book reviews. Many of these books were introduced to the group by a member of the library staff, whose schedule provides time for her to help teachers compile bibliographies and to preview books. The use of annotated booklists prepared by the library staff is another important aspect of the school-wide reading program. To keep students informed concerning new books, a list is distributed to the English classes each month. Supplementary booklists are also available in the areas of science, science fiction, biography, historical fiction, fiction, sports, animals, adventure, mystery, vocations, and humor. A master booklist for teachers indicates the reading levels of these books.

To coordinate the reading with the regular English work, this course offers units on grammar and the reading of books such as *Kon Tiki*, and others used are in the regular English courses. Recordings are employed also to familiarize the group with plays such as



*The Merchant of Venice*. Enthusiastic discussions, dramatizations, and question-and-answer panels make books and plays interesting and meaningful to the students.

### Learning Aids Are Listed

Many attractive reading and study materials are used with the freshman classes. Some which have been most helpful in the area of reading and study habits are:—*Study Your Way Through School* by Gerken, *Streamline Your Reading* and *You Can Read Better* by Witty, and *S.R.A. Better Reading Books* by Simpson. Helpful vocabulary building materials are:—*Word Wealth, Jr.* by Miller, *Progressive Word Mastery—Common Words for Secondary Schools* by Patton, *Word Clues* by Greene, and *Improving Your Vocabulary and Spelling* by Ketchum and Greene. Also used with the upper classmen are:—*Reader's Digest—Reading Skill Builder*, *Getting the Meaning* by Guiler and Coleman, *Living Your Language* by Colton, Davis, and Hanshaw, *Modern Reading* by Johnson, *Basic Reading Skills for High School Use* by Gray, Horsman, and Monroe, *Phonics Skilltext* by Smith, *Word Mastery Spellers* by Patton, *Let's Read* by Murphy, Miller, and Murphy, *Wings For Reading* and *Flying the Printways* by Hovious. The following anthologies are used:—*Adventures for Readers* by Ross, Numan, and Bowman, *Adventures in Reading* by Ross, Thompson, and Lodge, *Good Times Through Literature* by Pooley, Pooley, Leyda, and Zellhoefer, *Worlds of People*, *Worlds of Adventure*, and *Worlds to Explore* by Bailey and

Leavell, and *Reading Round-Up* by Witty, Peterson, and Parker. Supplementary materials include:—*Practical English*, *Practical English Reading Workbooks*, *Practice Makes Perfect*, *Junior Scholastic*, *Literary Cavalcade*, and *World Week* published by Scholastic Magazines; *Our Times*, *Every Week*, *My Weekly Reader*, *The Little Wonder Books*, and *Read Magazine* published by the American Education Press; and *The Real People* series, *The Basic Science Education* series, *The Good Neighbor* series, and *The Way of Life* series published by Row, Peterson and Company.

### Instruction in Reading Skill Classes

This reading workshop offered to upperclassmen meets daily and yields one-half credit for the semester. The instruction does not aim merely to increase speed of reading through mechanical devices. The flashmeter and the reading accelerator are used primarily to motivate reading. Systematic instruction seeks to adjust rate to purposes and needs for reading. The emphasis is on understanding different reading skills and upon how and when to apply them. Opportunities are provided to transfer these skills to reading assignments in the content fields. Witty's book *How To Become A Better Reader* is the basic textbook used in these classes; it is supplemented by the speed tests in *S.R.A.'s Better Reading Books*. These interesting speed tests are also used as graded practice material for encouraging, outlining, summarizing, finding main ideas, noting details, skimming, and



building vocabulary skills. Records of progress are kept for each student and free reading is planned around the students' interests.

### **Accelerated-Reading Classes Are Provided for Superior Students**

The accelerated-reading classes provide instruction for good or above average readers who voluntarily elect a non-credit, six-week course to streamline their reading skills. These classes attract superior students whose ability and motivation permits rapid progress.

Reading materials which have proved useful in these classes include basic textbooks:—*How To Become A Better Reader* by Witty, *S.R.A. Better Reading Books* by Simpson, *The Wonderful World of Books* by Osborn; manuals and workbooks:—*Efficient Reading* by Brown, *A College Developmental Reading Manual* by Wilking and Webster, *Study-Type of Reading Exercises* by Strang, *Better Reading and Study Habits* by Kelly and Greene, *The Atlantic Guide to Better Reading Skills*, *Purposeful Reading in College* by McCallister; vocabulary and language development:—*Word Wealth* by Miller, *30 Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary* by Funk and Lewis, *Language in Action* by Hayakawa, *The Art of Plain Talk* by Flesch, *How to Read a Newspaper* by Dale, *How to Think Straight* by Thouless, *Progressive Word Mastery*—*Word Study for the Secondary Schools* by Patton.

Many other books are introduced including anthologies, biographies, and popular novels.

*Individual Work:* The materials and methods used with individual students are not greatly different from those employed in special reading groups, but the individual work provides a more thorough appraisal and diagnosis of each student's needs and a better opportunity to adjust the instruction to his developmental pattern and changing requirements.

*Reading Committee:* Because the primary concern of the program is to establish school-wide, developmental reading instruction, a committee has been appointed to make a long-range study of the reading needs of the school and to develop a program of instruction. Since much teaching of reading techniques in the regular classroom is indirect and incidental, this committee has recognized the need to emphasize the reading skills in daily assignments and to indicate which reading techniques are appropriate for use in different assignments.

### **Continuous Evaluation Is Made**

One of the purposes of the reading program is to promote growth and improvement through continuous evaluation of our methods, materials, and administrative policies. Continuous evaluation insures the maintenance of a flexible and functional approach to reading improvement. Gains as measured by standardized reading tests indicate that the time spent in the reading classes is worthwhile. The initial and terminal test scores on the *California Reading Test* given to freshmen showed large average gains. On alternate forms of the *Triggs Diagnostic Reading Test*, Survey Section, upper-

classmen averaged the following gains: (1) Rate: from 283 w.p.m. to 370 p.p.m.; (2) Comprehension of Speeded Materials: from 42nd percentile to 80th percentile; and (3) Comprehension of Main Ideas and Details: from 33rd percentile to the 53rd percentile.

More important, perhaps, than the reading gains made by these groups was change in attitude toward reading. Practice and knowledge of efficient reading skills stimulated interest and prepared the pupils to study assignments in other classes more effectively. This led to a change in attitude toward reading in the different subject areas, as well as to improvement in the mental health of the students.

Evaluation of the E.T.H.S.'s reading program includes the opinions and suggestions of the students. We will feel sure that our reading program is fulfilling its purposes when we receive comments such as this: "Although I saw no real gain or purpose in taking a reading course, my attitude changed with my learning to apply myself not only to pleasurable materials, but also to serious types. The main part in learning is all in how you approach it. I believe more in my ability to do a better job in anything I undertake because the course has shown me how to go about it. This course is really changing my attitude about many things."

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### **Fellowship Is Available**

Teachers College, Columbia University, announces The Macmillan

Company Fellowship, which will provide three thousand dollars for the academic year for a student to pursue graduate study, at Teachers College, specializing in the area of teaching and learning of reading and other language arts at the elementary school level.

The first appointment will be made for the academic year 1955-56. Application forms, which may be secured from the Chairman of the Committee on Fellowships, Teachers College, 525 West 120th Street, New York 27, New York, should be submitted before May 1, 1955.

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### **Symposium on Remedial Reading Is Announced By Syracuse University**

A Symposium on Reading which will concern itself with such problems as the place of remedial reading in the public schools, the role of the remedial reading teacher, and the relationship between reading clinics and the schools will take place at Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, August 15-26, 1955. A limited number of participants can attend. Those who desire to attend should make an early application to Dr. William D. Sheldon, director of the Reading Clinic. An attempt will be made to keep the group small so that there can be discussions between teachers and staff members. Consultants for the conferences will be Dr. Albert J. Harris, Dr. Helen M. Robinson, Dr. Emmett A. Betts, and Dr. George Spache.

## Reading Problems Among College Students

by WILLARD ABRAHAM  
● ARIZONA STATE COLLEGE

ONE OF THE MAJOR problems met by college instructors can be stated simply: Many students cannot read effectively and understand fully the materials assigned to them. As a result, they get little from their courses. The fault frequently lies with some of their teachers who fail to recognize the problem, who may use the same text, bibliography, and lecture notes year after year, adapting them in no way to different classes and to the variations in abilities within each class.

Educational literature abounds with phrases like "take cues from the children," "attend to individual needs, abilities, and aptitudes," and "recognize individual differences." However, we sometimes lack an adequate understanding of what such statements imply at the college level. This failure exists sometimes in professional education courses as well as in other areas. In our teacher preparation programs we often tell college students to "take children where they are in their development," and yet we ourselves may ignore this very same advice in working with college "children."

Let's ask ourselves a few pertinent questions:

- How often do we wait until we've met a class before we decide what textbook to use? (Of course, we can place the blame for early textbook requisitions on the college administration, but would most

of us do any differently even if we could?)

- How frequently do we bring our bibliographies up-to-date — and how much allowance do we make in them for differences in reading abilities?
- What efforts do we make to put into effect the statement which many of us approve—when it applies to elementary and secondary school teachers: "Every teacher is a teacher of reading"?
- How much do we know about the backgrounds of our students—home, academic work, employment, relationships with other persons? Do we *really* feel that such knowledge would help us become better college teachers and help us to adapt our materials more satisfactorily to the students—or, perhaps we feel it's easier to teach without such information; without it, we can blithely continue in the same old groove.

It is not difficult to recognize the reasons for our frequent lack of attention to the needs of students—large classes, committee memberships, professional writing and reading, and so many others. Although the varied demands on our time are legitimate causes for not doing what we might with our students, they are not sufficient to make us close our eyes to

their reading needs and to the fact that at least some of us are probably neglecting this primary responsibility.

### **Start With Objectives Of the Course**

In our college classes one of the items we inevitably have in mind at the start of each new term is the objectives of the course. What do we want the students to get from it? What are the major reasons for its being offered? But we seldom follow through with a question related to the "how" of the matter: How can we attain those objectives most satisfactorily? The evidence that we do not consider sufficiently the ways of teaching objectives is apparent in the infrequency with which we change techniques of teaching, try new ideas, or attempt to experiment with new audio-visual aids or other materials.

If we did, more of us would know by this time that the lecture method, with no class participation, is one of the least effective teaching techniques. Some activity on the part of the students may result in less *coverage* of subject matter, but in all probability more will probably be *learned*.

Earl C. Kelly in *The Workshop Way of Learning* stresses this point effectively when he says that "most of the time that is wasted in education is wasted when the individual proceeds on the dictum of someone else to do something that is devoid of meaning to him. By doing this, it is possible to get into so-called 'production' sooner, and to turn out more volume of 'product', but we mistake the shadows for the substance if we judge growth on

the basis of volume of material produced."

If we would listen more to the students and give them an opportunity to use words related to the subject of the course, we will have taken a significant step toward having them read their subjects of study with interest and understanding. Because vocabulary expansion takes place from speaking and writing into reading (as well as in reverse), opening our classrooms to the ideas of our students may lead directly to their reading more to clarify those ideas. Our using words for understanding—and not to impress—might be a good rule to follow in this connection.

### **Need for Small Classes**

While statistical proof of the advisability of small classes as an aid to effective teaching is lacking, most of us still feel that we can do a more personalized job with 20 rather than with 100 students. Large classes encourage us to use the same old set of yellowing lecture notes, and thus lose the opportunity for adapting language to the needs of specific students. With small classes one of our excuses for lecturing will be gone, but on the affirmative side, we will have the time to understand the problems of reading comprehension and accomplishment of each of our students. In addition, we would then have little excuse for not adapting our reading lists to the abilities of the students in our classes.

On the college level we frequently overlook one of the prime motivating factors toward increasing the amount and quality of reading our students do.



Recognition, praise, and success can go a long way toward helping them want to read more and gain more from what they read. Of course, such techniques presuppose materials adapted to the interests and abilities of the students.

If we really want to increase both the quantity and quality of their reading, it is important that we realize the limitations we impose by several of our malpractices; (1) taking pride in the number of students we fail; (2) giving trick examinations; and (3) demanding the fulfillment of numerous busy-work assignments. Perhaps we assume that the "tough" attitude increases the students' desire for reading, but while it may do so to a limited extent temporarily, its ultimate result is to confuse the student's word language of a subject which discourages writing or talking about it except when it is absolutely necessary. Besides, how much can we expect the student to retain ideas and how much will be read after the course is over, if we have deliberately made it an experience he will do his best to forget.

More of us these days understand the use of a textbook as a guide rather than as a page-by-page hurdle to be memorized. To some extent we recognize the advantages of adjusting our instruction to the gaps, limitations, and interests of our students. For example, if we want students to gain some insight into how children think and react, as preparation for becoming teachers, we could tell them of the fears, anxieties, hopes, and ambitions of children at varying stages of de-

velopment. But reading W. Somerset Maugham's masterful story of young Philip in *Of Human Bondage*, Robert Fontaine's autobiography, *The Happy Time*, or Margaret Lee Runbeck's charming *Our Miss Boo* can give meaning to the skeleton of research findings, and besides, books such as these open new vistas of literature perhaps not known before.

### Wide Reading Develops Students

Whenever a college teacher expands his or her own horizons to realize that reading should not be confined to the limits of the course or semester, the students in his class will profit. Reading for the expanding leisure most of us are now getting, reading to understand one's self, reading to help prepare for one's occupational future, reading to help one become an enlightened citizen in a democracy—how much more wise do these objectives sound than reading limited to this course, this textbook, and this term! We're in an era where knowledge of government affairs, the world around us, scientific discoveries, and human relationships in the family and community are vital to our living well-adjusted lives—or living at all, and yet we frequently mislead our students into thinking THE COURSE in its most limited sense is all that matters to us.

Of course, one of our own limitations is obvious in this discussion. It's our own lack of wide reading, pride in our not voting, and our inability to break down the barriers which separate us from the rest of the world.



Some of us exchange opinions only with those who exchange opinions only with us; we think we're well-read if we subscribe to one daily newspaper and *Life*, and feel satisfied and smug because we've stood up against the barrage of friends and advertising and still have a home "unsullied" by a television set. If we're satisfied, we tell ourselves, with the academic limitations and restricted horizons we impose on our own lives, what need should these young people have for recreational reading, human relationships of varied types, and entertainment or even education by way of a TV set? Limiting ourselves, and feeling satisfied within those boundaries because we may not know what lies outside, may force us to set up barriers on the lives of others.

While reading is obviously only one of many aids to learning, if handled by the college teacher with understanding, it can be used effectively within the boundaries of one course as well as in the broader concept already indicated. The term "developmental" has been implied all through this article, through emphasis on individuals, whether they be students or instructors, variety of materials, reading for various purposes, and on the point so frequently made by experts in this field of enjoying the process as well as the results of reading.

#### **Material Must Be Suited To Reading Abilities**

A recent aid toward improving reading on other levels is the preparation and publicity of so-called high interest—low ability materials. Adap-

tations of that trend can be made by college teachers through their reading lists if they give recognition to the *fact* that all of their students—even though they are of the same age and academic level—do not have the same reading ability. If there is a range in reading ability of five years or so in one class in the intermediate and upper elementary grades, we must assume at least a similar wide range on the college level despite the partial screening which takes place at college entrance. Varied reading materials can usually be more effective than a single textbook meticulously followed.

Causes of reading difficulties in college are numerous and overlapping in their origins. Poor teaching in elementary and secondary schools, no reading in the home environments of students, bright students ridiculed into feigning reading disabilities, physical limitations, emotional disturbances—the list is familiar to those of us who have studied reading problems as they exist earlier on the educational ladder. And well it should be, for these young people are the same ones who may have had problems in younger years, but whose situation is now even more serious because of additional demands placed on them which are almost entirely ignored by their instructors.

#### **Reading Clinics Can Help**

In some colleges, concern for reading deficiencies is concentrated in the institution's reading clinic. Frequently that service can perform a much-needed function if (1) it does not put emphasis so completely on gadgets and various mechanical devices, and

(2) the diagnostic function is followed up with a broad, individual program adapted to the specific needs of the student.

College remedial reading classes, if limited in size and properly planned, may also be helpful. However, some legitimate questions might be asked their supporters and instructors. If evidence can be provided for satisfactory answers, perhaps more universal faith might be built up in the work. For example, can we answer affirmatively these questions: (1) has reading ability been raised by the class beyond the point it might have reached *without* the course? (2) has it increased *more* through this class than if other types of remedial measures were used? (3) is the test of reading ability used a valid one? and (4) do the other college instructors use these classes as an honest referral rather than a chance to pass the buck in the effort to relieve themselves of all responsibility regarding their students' reading deficiencies?

A study conducted a few years ago among students in several representative colleges located in various parts of the country resulted in these conclusions:

- College students devote only a few hours a week to reading not required in school.
- Their reading of books is extremely limited in number.
- Little reading is done in the scholarly and more professional magazines. The most popular magazines are those consisting of

pictures and light fiction and non-fiction.

### Implications Are Listed

Some of the implications in this study for college programs in general are as follows:

1. Since "heavy school assignments" was the factor checked most frequently as the reason for not reading more, there is a need for evaluating the type and length of college assignments to see whether they are really responsible for limited reading. That evaluation should determine whether such limitations are justified in view of the contents of assignments.
2. A further analysis can be made within the college to discover ways in which students' reading can be enriched. A study of library facilities, current reading materials available, and browsing rooms may be revealing. The place of the instructor, college library, low-cost books, dormitory libraries, reading courses with and without credit, and book clubs may all be investigated as possible outlets for enriching the reading of students.
3. Experimentation may be conducted with the picture magazine as a teaching device, since it is the most popular kind of periodical reading.
4. The development of reading habits, as far as quality, quantity, and variety are concerned, is

- not the job of any special person, group, or department in many colleges. The need for a carefully planned program of this type was indicated in the study.
5. An examination of bibliographical readings may be warranted, as indicated earlier. Publication dates, length, style, and content might be reviewed by individual instructors or departmental committees.
  6. In many ways the reading patterns of college students are similar to those of high school students and college graduates. The continuity in growth is an important factor to keep in mind.
  7. The need exists to bring to the attention of students the availability of inexpensive books in paper-bound editions. Their reading choices indicate a desire for such materials, but only a limited awareness that they are available.
  8. Since many magazines which were required reading are now read voluntarily by students, introductions by college instructors might encourage reading of more of the professional and scholarly publications. Careful guidance rather than autocratic "persuasion" should be the keynote.
  9. The amount of comic strip and comic book reading does not indicate that there need be much concern regarding this phase of the reading done by college students. More serious is the little time devoted as a whole to outside reading.
  10. The changes in reading between freshman and senior standing indicate that these formative years can be used to help mold an enjoyable and profitable reading pattern. The pleasures, the materials, the enthusiasm of teachers, and the time for such reading must be part of a program which exists in all parts of the college.
- Because reading problems on the college level have accumulated over a period of many years is no reason for those of us teaching in colleges to delay even longer the attention that should be given to them. We can certainly be sure of one thing—our procrastination won't solve them, or guilt feelings on our part won't help matters either. Most of us already have enough, or too much, to do. The task is one of having an enlightened faculty and administration become aware of problems their students face. If this is done, reading difficulties and their relationship to concerns of students in their course work, will come high on any list which they may make.

## Reading as a Source of the Ideal Self

by SAMUEL WEINGARTEN

● CHICAGO CITY JUNIOR COLLEGE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S need for idealized persons with whom to identify has long been recognized by students of human development. From childhood through adolescence, and even into adulthood, the individual takes his parents, teachers, youth-group leaders, age-mates, and adults as exemplars. The question for the ideal self is often difficult during the adolescent years when parental examples are no longer accepted uncritically and when important decisions determining the individual's social adjustment must be made. The ego-ideal becomes a composite of all the identifications which the young person makes. From all the persons with whom he identifies he may acquire personal traits, attitudes, and behavior patterns. One of the ways by which his character is shaped too is through imitation, usually unconscious, which accompanies identification.

### Reading Helps in Formulation Of Ideals

In addition to people who serve as models, representations of people in comic strips and comic books, motion pictures, radio and television performances, and especially in books serve as objects for identification and imitation. The role of reading in giving youth ideals for personality development and behavior has been pointed out by many writers on the relation-

ship of reading to the needs of young people. Those writers who consider reading as an aid in personal-social development through the help which it gives in the establishment of goals imply the value of reading in the formation of the ideal self.

Anderson pointed out in 1912 that most of the earlier studies showed that young people's ideals are largely formed from reading. In her study she asked adolescents to "Name two or three characters that you have read about, in history, in literature, or elsewhere, which you would wish to be like." The boys led in the choice of historic or public characters: eighty-five per cent indicated such characters as contrasted with only thirty-five per cent of the girls. The girls led in the selection of characters from fiction: sixty-four per cent indicated such characters, as contrasted with fifteen per cent of the boys<sup>1</sup>. In 1930 Hill reported the results of an investigation of the ideals of 8,813 young people ranging in age from six to twenty years. He employed this question to obtain his data: "Of all the persons whom you have heard, or read about, or seen, whom would you care to be like or to resemble? Why?" He found that the largest number of ideals for the group were selected from historic

<sup>1</sup>Roxanna Anderson, "A Preliminary Study of the Reading Tastes of High School Pupils," *The Pedagogical Seminary*, XIX (December 1912) 451.



Americans, historic foreigners, and contemporary persons widely known to the public. Relatively few of the ideals were selected from characters in religion or fiction. For sources of the ideal self for the seventeen-through-twenty-year age group the investigation showed them to come from historic and public characters (boys, 77.2 per cent; girls, 42.3 per cent; both, 61.3 per cent); from characters (girls, 2.9 per cent; both, 2.8 per cent); from fiction (boys, 2.8 per cent); from characters in religion (boys, 2.1 per cent; girls, 2.8 per cent; both, 2.4 per cent)<sup>2</sup>. Havighurst, Robinson, and Dorr reported in 1946 an investigation that was undertaken to determine the stages in the development of an individual's concept of the ideal self, from childhood through adolescence. The subjects of the study, 1,147 boys and girls, ages ten through seventeen years, were asked to "Describe in a page or less the person you would like most to be. This may be a real person, or an imaginary person. He or she may be a combination of several people." The replies indicated less than ten per cent of the ideal selves to be in the category of heroes or great people of history or literature<sup>3</sup>. In a study by Havighurst and Rieger in which a group of sixteen year olds was asked to write on the topic "The Person I Would Like to Be Like", none of the replies included a "Hero read about" as the ideal self.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>David Spence Hill, "Personification of Ideals by Urban Children," *Journal of Social Psychology*, I (August 1930), 382.

<sup>3</sup>Robert J. Havighurst, Myra Z. Robinson, and Mildred Dorr, "The Development of the Ideal Self in Childhood and Adolescence," *Journal of Educational Research*, XL (December 1946), 255.

### Results of Research Study Are Listed

In 1952 the present writer submitted a questionnaire study to 1,256 college students (705 males; 551 females), whose ages ranged from sixteen to thirty years, to ascertain the ways in which their voluntary reading had contributed toward the solution of their problems of personal and social development<sup>5</sup>. Among the items in the questionnaire to which the student was asked to reply was: "Have you ever read of a character in a story or play who seemed to be your ideal? Give the title of the book and the name of the character. Write a characterization of this person, giving his or her chief traits." Four hundred and ten students, 32.6 per cent of the total number answering, indicated that they had found in their reading a character who represented to them an image of the ideal self: of these 233 were males, 31.6 per cent of the total number of males; 187 were females, 33.9 per cent of the total number of females. Three hundred and forty-three of these students gave amplified affirmative answers, of which 322 (181 males; 141 females) were sufficiently specific to be of use for analysis in this study.

One hundred and ninety-six (102 males; 94 females), or 60.8 per cent of these identifications, were with fictional characters. One hundred and

<sup>4</sup>Robert J. Havighurst and Hilda Taba, *Adolescent Character and Personality* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1949), 72.

<sup>5</sup>For a complete report on this inquiry see Samuel Weingarten, "Developmental Values in Voluntary Reading," *The School Review*, LXII (April 1954), 222-230.

twenty-six (79 males; 47 females), or 39.1 per cent, were with characters from life represented in writings—historic and religious characters, characters prominent in contemporary public life, and less known characters in real life. In this second group, the largest number of identifications were historic characters, 35.7 per cent, and with contemporary public figures, 28.5 per cent. The amplified replies made it possible to determine the traits of the persons who represented these young people's ideal selves.

#### Types of Ideal Selves Are Classified

From these replies it was possible to classify according to types the ideal selves originating in persons in life about whom these students had read. The best known, and probably the most psychologically valid, types of men are the six suggested by Eduard Spranger: (1) the Theoretical—whose dominant interest is the discovery of truth; (2) the Economic—who is characteristically interested in what is useful; (3) the Esthetic—who sees his highest value in form and harmony; (4) the Social—whose highest value is love of people, one or many, conjugal, filial, friendly, or philanthropic; (5) the Political—who is interested primarily in power; (6) the Religious—whose highest value may be called unity, the quest to comprehend the cosmos as a whole, to relate himself to its embracing totality<sup>6</sup>. To these types may be added another, the more mundane type whose values

are pleasure seeking and vital. The classifications of the ideal selves of the 126 students (79 males; 47 females) who found their ego-ideal in persons in life, are given in the following analysis:

<i>Types of Men</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Both</i>
• The Theoretical. . .	15	3	18
• The Economic. . .	3	1	4
• The Esthetic. . . . .	6	3	9
• The Social. . . . .	29	24	53
• The Political. . . . .	9	6	15
• The Religious. . . .	4	4	8
• The Mundane. . . .	13	6	19
Totals. . . . .	79	47	126

Among the Theoretical men with whom students identified were: Einstein, Burbank, Fritz Haber, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Galileo, Socrates, Thoreau, Gregory VII, Pasteur, Marie Curie. The Economic men who represented the ideal for some students were: Henry Ford, Carleton Putnam, and Benjamin Franklin. Creative artists represented to other students the type of person they would like to become: Horowitz, Edward Oliver, Beethoven, Frank Lloyd Wright, Cellini, Chopin, Pavlova, and Oliver. The devotion of these persons to the welfare of others was considered by the largest number of students as a quality worthy of emulation: Jesus Christ, Saint Paul, Father Damien, A. E. Hertzler, Frank Leavell, Darrow, Rockne, Ernie Pyle, Will Rogers, Debs, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lincoln, Gideon Jackson, Paul Revere, Robin Hood, Saint Peter, Ruth, Saint The-

<sup>6</sup>Eduard Spranger, *Types of Men*, trans. Paul W. Pigors (Halle: Niemeyer Verlag, 1928), pp. 109-246.

resa, Mary Baker Eddy, Tom Paine, Joan of Arc, Dolly Madison, Mrs. Jefferson Davis, Marie Curie, Florence Nightingale, Katharine Cornell, Lou Gehrig, Mary White, Mrs. John Gunther, Kitty Beaurepous. Leaders in many fields who have achieved personal power, influence and renown seemed to some students worthy of being exemplars: Joe DiMaggio, Monty Stratton, Lou Gehrig, Johnny Revolta, Booker T. Washington, Frank Bettger, Queen Elizabeth I. To others the persons whose values were largely spiritual represented the ideal self: Saint Bernadette, George W. Truett, Thomas Merton, Charles H. Spurgeon, Saint Augustine. Their zest for life attracted a large number of students to these men and women: Richard Halliburton, Anthony Wayne, Theodore Roosevelt, "Wild Bill" Hickok, Bill Mauldin, Coach Dan Walker, Father Marquette, Stewart D. Engstrand, George L. Mallory, Louise Baker, Jesse Fremont, John Barrymore, Helen Keller. The books in which the students became acquainted with these persons were largely biographies and autobiographies; in a few instances these works were in fictional form.

#### **Good Reading Materials Help to Develop Good Characters**

Reading materials can help young people to master the developmental tasks characteristic of their growth level. Through identification with characters and situations in books which they read they often find clues for their own adjustment and the solution of their problems. Of the 196

students who indicated fictional characters as ideal selves, 138 characterized these persons in such a way that they can be classified in relation to the problems in personality development and social adjustment with which adolescents and young adults are confronted. The ideal selves seen in fictional characters can be grouped in the following categories of people: (1) those who have attained independence, have the courage of their convictions, and are individualistic and self reliant (e.g., Howard Roark in Rand, *The Fountainhead*); (2) those who are fearless and brave (e.g., Sydney Carton in Dickens, *Tale of Two Cities*); (3) those who know how to get along with others (e.g., Antonia in Cather, *My Antonia*); (4) those who understand people (e.g., Gill Carter in Clark, *The Ox-Bow Incident*); (5) those who are liked by other people (e.g., Vivian in Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*); (6) those who have qualities of leadership (e.g., Hugh Conway in Hilton, *Lost Horizon*); (7) those who are altruistic (e.g., Jo in Alcott, *Little Women*); (8) those who are dedicated to their work, are conscientious in performing their duties, and are successful in their vocations (e.g., Steve in Robinson, *The Cardinal*); (9) those who work with determination toward a goal (e.g., Miss Bishop in Aldrich, *Miss Bishop*); (10) those who struggle with success against obstacles (e.g., Spike Russell in Tunis, *Rookie of the Year*); (11) those who search for truth (Larry in Maugham, *The Razor's Edge*); (12) those who are idealists in conflict with materialism (e.g.,

Robert Jordon in Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*); (13) those who put their religious ideals into action (e.g., Faye in Ingles, *Silver Trumpet*); (14) those who may be said to be rational (e.g., Martin Arrowsmith in Lewis, *Arrowsmith*); (15) those who search for knowledge (e.g., Madame Wu in Buck, *Pavilion of Women*); (16) those who have attained a good set of values (e.g., Kristin in Undset, *Kristin Lavransdatter*); (17) those who have had adventurous experiences (e.g., Jason Starbuck in Marshall, *Yankee Pasha*); (18) those who are able to bear the adversities of life and to accept them realistically (e.g., Jane Eyre in Bronte, *Jane Eyre*); (19) those who are resourceful (e.g., Sammy in Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*); (20) those who are well integrated (e.g., Sue in Boylston, *Sue Barton, Superintendent of Nurses*); (21) those who have social poise (e.g., Ashley Wilkes in Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*); (22) those who have lived cleanly (e.g., Roy Tucker in Tunis, *The Kid from Tomkinsville*).

#### Imitation Is Usually Unconscious

Imitation of an idealized person, someone in life or a character in a book, is usually unconscious; this probably explains the small number of students who were able to specify the exact ways in which they were affected by the ideal self in the acquisition of personality traits and in their behavior. Almost thirty per cent indicated that they had tried to develop personal qualities like those of characters in books and 12.4 per cent in-

dicated the ideal selves as these characters. Almost twenty-one per cent indicated that they had tried to imitate the behavior of characters in books: 7.3 per cent indicated these characters to be the ideal selves.

In the amplified answers, 79 males indicated that in reading they had found a person from life who became their ideal and whom they considered worthy of emulation: 16, or 20.2 per cent of them, indicated that they had tried to imitate the personal qualities of such characters, and only 6, or 7.6 per cent, indicated an effect on behavior. Of the 47 females making such identifications, 18, or 38 per cent, indicated an effect on personal qualities; 11, or 23 per cent, indicated an effect on behavior. Twenty-seven per cent of both males and females who idealized characters from life indicated that they had tried to acquire the personal characteristics of these persons; 13.4 per cent indicated that they had tried to model their behavior in accord with that of the idealized persons.

Of the 102 males who found their ideal in a fictional character, 18, or 17.6 per cent, tried to imitate the personal traits of these characters and only 4, or 3.9 per cent, their behavior. Of the 94 females thus identifying, 22, or 23.4 per cent, tried to become like the ideal characters and 8, or 8.5 per cent, tried to imitate their behavior. Of both the males and females, 20.4 per cent were affected to the extent of trying to acquire the ideal's personal traits, and 6 per cent to imitate their behavior. An examination of the replies related to the imitation of traits and behavior leads to the conclusion



that the students did not make a careful distinction in meaning between the personal characteristics and the behavior of the idealized persons. This, together with the factor of unconsciousness in imitation, is probably the explanation for the small percentage of students who indicated that they had tried to imitate the behavior of idealized persons.

### **Traits Are Listed**

The descriptive statements about the idealized persons revealed the traits which were imitated, consciously or unconsciously. Most frequently mentioned were maturity, wisdom, strength of character, courageousness in maintaining one's point of view, independence and self-reliance. The possibilities for socialization through the imitation of traits can be seen in the frequent mention of traits which are characteristic of the person who is concerned with the welfare of others, the altruistic person. High also in the frequency of mention were the traits of the person who succeeds: ambitions, industry, perseverance, and confidence. The person who is intelligent, rational, or intellectual was admired by an equally large number of students.

One hundred and three students indicated in the amplified answers that they had consciously tried to imitate the personality traits and the behavior of the idealized characters encoun-

tered in reading. Most frequently mentioned were traits related to the individual's concern with the welfare of other people. Almost as frequently the traits of maturity, wisdom, strength of character, courageousness in maintaining one's point of view, independence, and self-reliance were mentioned. High in frequency of mention also were traits related to the person who succeeds and the traits of intellect, rationality, and intelligence. These groups of traits parallel closely in order of preference those traits noted in the preceding paragraph as the ones admired.

### **Developmental Value of Wide Reading**

The significance of these findings is that they show the effects that reading can have on the development of the individual. They disclose the way in which youth derive developmental value from reading by recognizing ideal characters and by emulating their traits and behavior. A developmental reading program should make available to young people in classroom and library a variety of reading materials containing characters whose worthy qualities and actions may become goals for emulation. Through identification youth can attain new stature by attempting to reach personal qualities and behavior patterns that are marks of wholesome growth.

## Why John Hated Reading

by HOMER L. J. CARTER AND DOROTHY J. MCGINNIS  
● WESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

MANY TEACHERS and clinicians are aware of the close relationship between reading failure and emotional disturbances resulting in personality maladjustment. Failure in reading has been attributed to emotional conflicts, and emotional maladjustment has been created by reading disabilities. A brief summary of a boy's experience with his parents and teachers illustrates the need of dealing with both problems simultaneously.

### Frustration in the Home

Mrs. Becker called the reading clinic for help. Her son, John, who is twelve years old, has had trouble with reading throughout his school career. Mrs. Becker said, "Miss Lewis, the sixth grade teacher, has insisted that John cannot go into the seventh grade unless he gets help in reading from me. Each morning during his summer vacation I have worked with John for one hour. Both of us become so exasperated with each other and the whole reading problem that by the end of the reading period we are yelling frantically at each other. This morning when I tried to round up the boy for his daily lesson, he was nowhere to be found. My husband reported to me later that he had discovered our son hiding in the basement in order to escape from his reading assignment."

Apparently, Mrs. Becker wanted an immediate appointment for her son at the clinic. An overpowering need,

however, for catharsis prevailed, and she went into further detail concerning John's reading problem, "Both Mr. Becker and I have worked for hours with John. We have had him read to us each evening, and we've tried to help him with his school work. Mr. Becker and I are both university graduates, and we can't understand why our son has so much difficulty with reading. We are anxious to find someone who will assume the responsibility of teaching John to read. For this service we are willing to pay anything, anything, mind you. John, you know, must not be permitted to fail. His teachers have pointed out that we should not be worried, that John's disability was merely a phase in his development and that one of these days he would find himself and become an excellent reader. I can't work with John any more. I haven't the patience."

An appointment was made with Mr. and Mrs. Becker, and they agreed to cooperate with the staff in securing a clinical history, physical examination, and other data essential to a careful study of a reading problem.

On the day of the examination two members of the clinic staff, by chance, observed the Becker family as they entered the building and came down the hall leading to the clinic. Mother and son apparently had not waited for Dad to park the car but had hurried into the building, and now Mother

with short rapid steps was approaching the reception room. Occasionally as she walked, she pushed the boy ahead of her, talking continuously as she did so. Without waiting for an introduction to members of the staff, Mrs. Becker began her admonitions to her son, "Now, John, sit right down here. Now, put your rubbers over here. Now, John, you can hang your jacket right here." In attempting to alleviate the tension of the situation, a member of the staff, having observed the insignia on John's jacket, asked him about his scout troop. But again Mother interrupted, "Now, John, talk right up to the man. They are just trying to help you, you know," and then, observing that several strands of the boy's hair were disarranged, Mother moistened her fingers and "slicked" the hair into place. It was easy to see that John was embarrassed and so was everyone except Mother.

In an interview with the parents it was learned that for five years John had been the only child in the family. During these years the attention and interest of his parents were centered upon him. Early growth and development were quite normal. At the age of three years John had a serious illness which was diagnosed as poliomyelitis. A mild hemiplegia became apparent. Parents and grandparents were solicitous and indulgent in their attitude toward John. It is reported that the child had little or no opportunity to assume responsibility in the home. John was read to for long periods of time, and he learned to recite "The Three Bears," "Little Black Sambo," and "The Owl and the Pussycat."

When visitors entered the home, John frequently would stand before them and exclaim, "I can recite. Want to hear me?" If those who listened forgot to applaud, John immediately did so and exclaimed, "I think that's good, don't you?"

When the boy was five years old, his parents persuaded him to spend several days with his grandparents while they attended to some urgent business. Much to the boy's discomfiture the time was extended to a week. Finally the father appeared and asked John if he wanted to go home to see his sister, Wendy. Obviously, John was pleased. Upon arrival, however, in his mother's room and seeing in her arms a wrinkled, red-faced baby, he exclaimed, "Mommy, let's take her back. She can't play with me." Mrs. Becker soon became aware of John's misbehavior. Lipstick was used in writing on newly painted walls and the boy became enuretic and sucked his thumb. Again and again John asked his parents, "Do you like me as well as you do Wendy?" Frequently he insisted upon his mother holding him as she told him stories or sang to him.

At the age of five years and six months John entered kindergarten. Here he met another mother person who had thirty-six children instead of two. His problems of adjustment began anew.

#### **More Frustration at School**

Accumulative records, well-prepared and maintained, have provided specific facts from which valuable inferences can be drawn. Some of these

facts aid in the understanding of John's maladjustment in the classroom. During the first two weeks of John's attendance in the kindergarten, his mother accompanied him each day and on several occasions she remained with him until he became interested in the activities of the other children. Miss Miles, John's teacher, reported that the boy was immature emotionally and that he had difficulty in bridging the gap between home and school. It was said that he could not assume responsibilities and that he could not plan and do things on time. He had difficulty in accepting changes in routine, and he was unable to accept opposition and defeat without being emotionally upset. In talking to strangers such as the principal or the superintendent, he showed undue boldness and attempted to talk without having much to say. Miss Miles pointed out that John memorized easily, was able to tell and recite stories and poems, and was able to notice likenesses and differences. It was said that the boy was alert and that he could generalize and make valid inferences.

Immediately after the Christmas vacation, formal work in reading was introduced, and all the children used the Dick and Jane readers. Apparently an emphasis was placed upon oral reading for it was reported that the children sat in a circle about the teacher and read aloud. John had difficulty in keeping his place, and it was said that he could read his book upside down as well as he could in its proper position. A note from the teacher summarized her estimate of

the boy's development at this stage in his educational career. "John's personality evidences a lack of social integration. He is emotionally immature and does not harmonize well with his group." Mrs. Becker said, "I did not disagree with this report. My son, however, was promoted to the first grade."

Miss Wilder, the first grade teacher, administered a reading test to her boys and girls and on the basis of her findings divided her children into fast and slow-moving groups. These groups were designated as the Blue Birds and the Yellow Birds. John was one of the Yellow Birds and soon discovered, so his mother reported, that the children making up this group were not expected to learn to read. Mrs. Becker said that her son liked to work with clay and that he spent most of his time in school engaged in this activity. At the request of the teacher the Binet test was administered to John by the school psychologist. His IQ was found to be 128. John reported that while he was in the first grade, those children who raised their hands were permitted to read. "I raised my hand once," he said, "and when I read, the kids laughed at me and said I was dumb. I've never forgotten how awful I felt." At the end of the first year John was promoted to the second grade. His teacher said, "John Becker is an immature child who has made satisfactory gains *for him*. He cannot read, and he has no method of word analysis, but I am sure that next year he will make satisfactory progress."

Miss Wright, John's second grade teacher, was known for her progres-



sive attitudes toward education. Mrs. Becker reported that at PTA meetings Miss Wright spoke enthusiastically about creative activity and the child's right to purpose and plan on his own. Miss Wright also expressed the opinion that adults should not attempt to impose their goals and objectives upon unsuspecting children. Mrs. Becker stated that she liked these ideas and believed that here was a teacher who understood her boy. The children in the second grade were encouraged to carry on many activities. They played store, and they took trips. They talked and argued about becoming good citizens. Mrs. Becker reported that John learned to discuss many things, but that he was not interested in details nor in the completion of any task required of him. She added, "He had no respect for authority and was only concerned in doing those things that come naturally." In summing up the work of the second grade, Mrs. Becker said, "John acquired a greater degree of self-confidence but he did not have an opportunity to develop skills in reading and word study." John, with his group, was promoted to the third grade.

John's third grade teacher was older and more experienced. She liked boys and girls and believed that if children were to go into the fourth grade adequately prepared they must attain certain abilities and skills in the third grade. Here an emphasis was placed upon reading and spelling. The requirements suggested by a basic text in reading were made of all the children. Throughout the year oral reading was emphasized. Apparently no

attempt was made to group children according to ability, interest or needs. Mrs. Becker said that the children were encouraged to read and report on books selected from the children's library. John reported having read seven when in the opinion of his parents he could not possibly have done so. Test and study procedures were used in spelling and consequently each week John was required to "study" twenty-five new words. In recalling the activities of the third grade John pointed out, "We had to do so many words that most of us gave up. Our teacher didn't tell us how to study words, she just made us do it. I've always hated spelling." While John was in the third grade, Mrs. Becker had several conferences with Miss Price, the teacher. Mother was told that John was reading only as well as a boy two months in the first grade when he was eight months in the third grade. Nevertheless, Mrs. Becker insisted upon John's promotion to the fourth grade.

#### **Frustration Also in Middle Grades**

In the fourth grade Miss Dunwell discovered, according to Mrs. Becker, that John did not like to read and that he would escape, if possible, from any reading activity. It was reported that he was inattentive, anti-social and defiant. It was said that John was aggressive and boisterous in the classroom. At the end of the school year a report sent to the parents suggested that John was becoming more anti-social and in the opinion of teacher and principal should be referred to the Children's Center for observation and treatment.

After the boy's promotion to the fifth grade, however, the parents failed to comply with this recommendation.

When John entered the fifth grade, he was not aware that his difficulty in the classroom was due to his inability to read. Up to this time he had not been penalized because of this deficiency. He had been promoted from grade to grade, and as far as John was concerned, he was as successful as his associates. He was sure that he hated reading and word study. A reading test administered by Mrs. Hubbell, John's fifth grade teacher, showed that he was reading as well as an individual four months in the first grade. Mrs. Hubbell reported to Mr. and Mrs. Becker the results of the reading test but, according to the parents, offered no solution to John's difficulty. The teacher explained that she had forty-eight children in the fifth grade and that she had assumed that the mechanics of reading had been mastered by the children and that she must spend her time in the teaching of social science, arithmetic and other subjects required by the principal. She reported that reading in her grade must be taught only as she did the regular work expected of her. She added, "Furthermore, I am not a specialist in this field, and I do not know how to teach first grade reading."

John, a well developed boy for his age, was heavier and taller than his associates. Because of his size and mature appearance, he was asked by the student council to become a member of the safety patrol. John accepted and then to his dismay discovered that he was required to read and report to

his group information provided by the council and the school principal. John gave up this assignment and reported to his parents that the work was for "squares" and he did not want to do it. Mrs. Becker explained that to make matters worse, John refused to attend church school and scout meetings primarily because on occasions he was expected to read aloud. Mr. Becker reported that his son had been unhappy in the fifth grade and that he had threatened to run away from school on several occasions. In an interview John said, "I didn't want my friends to know that I was so dumb. Mother thinks that Wendy is smarter than I am. Even Dad tells me that I can't read as well as my little sister." At the end of the school year John was promoted to the sixth grade.

When John's problem was considered in the clinic, Miss Lewis, the sixth grade teacher, and John's parents were present. In an interview with John, he pointed out that he liked his sixth grade teacher but that she did not teach reading because they had so many other things to do. In discussing this with Miss Lewis, she explained that reading was taught incidentally in her group and that she had no classes in reading. Detailed information was provided by the family physician concerning the boy's health and a report by an ophthalmologist made a consideration of physical factors more complete. Developmental and physical findings in this case were negative in all respects. After periods of testing, interviewing of teacher and parents, the staff of the clinic was

ready to summarize the significant factors in the case.

### **Interpretation of Relevant Factors**

John Becker is a boy demonstrating a high degree of mental maturity who has been unable to make satisfactory progress in the language arts and especially reading primarily because of emotional reactions which have resulted from formal instruction in reading before a sufficient degree of readiness had developed. Emotional immaturity, neglect on the part of his teachers, and the attitude of the boy's family to his difficulty are contributing factors.

These inferences and general conclusions were agreed upon by the parents and teacher. Both remedial and corrective measures were developed, discussed in detail, and finally accepted.

### **Brief Summary of Therapy**

In providing remedial treatment the following measures have been worked out by those directly concerned with the problem.

1. Through frequent interviews, John accepted the fact that he was a bright and capable boy who possessed the ability not only to read effectively and well but to make a satisfactory adjustment in the classroom. When this idea was accepted, John put forth more effort in his daily work and requested assistance in the clinic. In fact, John asked to remain in the sixth grade for another year. He said quite frankly, "I'm not ready for junior high school."

2. Members of the reading clinic and Miss Lewis were able to provide John with story material at his interest and reading levels. Words essential to the reading of the story were developed by means of a visual, auditory and kinesthetic approach. The instructional period was limited to twenty minutes. With each new story, vocabulary development was followed by silent reading to answer questions suggested by John and his teacher. Oral reading was permitted only after he had demonstrated ability to understand the content and to express the ideas of the writer in a way which would be pleasing to a listening group. New materials of increasing difficulty having an interest to John and at the same time correlated with his reading achievement were selected. This selection was applied in all subject matter fields. John learned to convert main chapter headings into questions and then discover for himself the answers. At the end of the year John was reading material generally read by children in the fifth grade.

3. It was easy for Mr. and Mrs. Becker to understand that corrective work in reading can seldom, if ever, be carried on successfully by parents. They accepted the fact that comments concerning the excellent reading attainments of Wendy had no beneficial effect upon John and that comparisons of the two children frequently resulted in frustration on the part of their son. This, they agreed to avoid but it required five months of sustained effort before they were finally able to apply the idea that the abilities and skills of their children were different and

that comparisons accomplished little.

4. Mrs. Becker was finally able to see herself as others saw her and was able to realize that she had been both a contributing and exciting factor in her son's emotional maladjustment. Medical assistance was of great value in her case. As a result of better health and an understanding of her behavior, cooperation between home and school was greatly increased.

5. Miss Lewis, the sixth grade teacher, acknowledged that reading should be taught fundamentally as well as incidentally. She learned the value of specific aims, well-selected materials and definite procedures. Flexible grouping was used throughout the year. Miss Lewis made a conscientious effort to convey to her boys and girls the purpose of each reading assignment. Tension was consequently reduced. Parents reported an increase in comradeship between teacher and children.

6. Both home and school have recognized the value of praise, commendation, and the stimulating effect of real success.

#### **Evaluation of Therapy**

Upon completing the work of the sixth grade, John Becker, according to scores on the *Iowa Silent Reading Test*, was reading as well as an individual eight months in the sixth grade. The boy was proud of his achievement. He was a frequent vis-

itor at school and city libraries and less time was spent in the home viewing television. In the opinion of his teacher and parents, John was now ready for the experiences of a junior high school student. Nearly all the emotional factors in this case have disappeared, and John has been enthusiastic concerning his adventures with books. Will he continue to make progress in reading? There are still many hazards ahead.

• • •

#### **Local Council News**

The Chicago Area Council feels they were especially privileged at their November meeting by having on their program Dr. William S. Gray, Dr. Paul Witty and Dr. David Kopel. The discussion centered around the question "How Good Is Reading Instruction Today?" Dr. Wendell Lanton gave a brief description of his research on this subject. A lively discussion ensued and the teachers took advantage of their opportunity to ask questions. The Council feels certain they are the only local council, who can boast of having the immediate past-president and the president-elect of the National Council on the same program. They are planning to sponsor an open meeting on Saturday evening, March 5, 1955 at the Conrad Hilton Hotel when the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Convention will be held in Chicago.



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## WHAT RESEARCH SAYS TO THE TEACHER OF READING

HELEN M. ROBINSON  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

### READING INTERESTS

**T**EACHERS from the primary grades through college generally recognize that a study of the reading interests of their students is one of the most important aspects of teaching reading. This is true because we know that children learn to read more rapidly if they are interested in the materials used. Textbook publishers usually give very careful attention to the research dealing with group interests at various ages when they choose the contents of their books. But there are many pupils whose interests deviate from those of the majority. Hence, it is necessary to develop an interest in the selections taught, or to choose other selections which have greater appeal for particular children.

In addition teachers must be alert to their responsibilities for promoting broad and worthwhile interests, while they encourage the extension of those which are of value to each learner. The foregoing considerations were basic in selecting the aspects of reading interests briefly covered in the remainder of this paper.

### Methods of Investigation

Many attempts have been made to develop reliable and valid techniques for investigating reading interests. The technique used most frequently is the

reading interest inventory. Others include case studies, personal interviews, records of books withdrawn from libraries, and diary records of books, magazines, and newspapers read during a given period of time. Informal conversations about books which were liked or disliked have provided clues for some reports too. Each of these techniques has unique advantages as well as special limitations. Therefore, it is well to remember that they may yield somewhat different results.

### Trends in Reading Interests

General agreement has been reported concerning some aspects of reading interests. Research reports agree that there is a consistent change in the interests of groups of children as they grow older. Group interests begin to be different for boys and girls at the middle grade level, and this difference continues into adult life. The number of years of schooling appears to be related to adult reading interests, as do occupational choices.

A number of studies of reading interests in relation to age reveal some trends for groups of pupils. For example, in the primary grades, both boys and girls enjoy stories about other children their ages and about animals. Narrative is the type of writ-

ing strongly preferred at this level.

By the pre-adolescent period, the interests of the majority of boys turn toward adventure stories, descriptions of "how-to-do-it", hero-worship, hobbies, and science. During this period, the dominant interests of girls turn toward home and family life, fantasy, and they show some interest in adventure. It is significant that girls will chose boys' books, but the boys do not like girls' books. Near the end of this period, pupils usually do more free-reading than at any time in their school careers.

Adolescent boys show dominant interests in reading about mysteries, sports, recreational activities, and comics. On the other hand, girls turn toward romance and stories of teenage problems. Girls at this level begin to read adult books and show greater preference for fictitious characters than do boys.

Adult reading interests are varied and complex. Most investigations show that adults read newspapers and magazines more frequently than books, and that they choose fiction more often than non-fiction. Waples and Tyler<sup>1</sup> concluded that "international attitudes and problems" and "personal hygiene" were the only two topics of interest to all of the groups they studied. While there were many common interests among certain groups, great variability was also revealed.

A few studies of the reading interests of retarded readers show that in

general their interests are similar to those of their age-mates. The fact that their reading problems make it necessary for them to read books written for younger children creates a problem which has been only partially solved during the past few years. Some of the simplified classics were designed to meet this need, but recent books written especially for retarded readers have considered dominant interests, especially those of boys.

A very recent study by Rudman<sup>2</sup> considered what children were looking up in books and what they wanted to find out about, in addition to what they wanted to read about. Based on a sample from 270 communities, the investigator concluded that science was a persistent choice and that science topics were looked up frequently.

We need continuous studies of children's reading interests. It is possible that such factors as new media of mass communication and changing social conditions accompany changing reading interests at various ages.

### Group versus Individual Interests

In the preceding section a brief glimpse of certain trends relating to reading interest of groups was given. One of the major values for teachers of this type of information lies in selecting materials which are more likely to appeal to the greatest number of pupils. But they give us very little help in planning to meet the reading needs of individuals in a classroom. For this purpose, it is essential to know

<sup>1</sup>Douglas Waples and Ralph W. Tyler, *What People Want to Read About*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert C. Rudman, "The Informational Needs and Reading Interests of Children in Grades Four Through Eight", *Elementary School Journal*, (To be published)

a great deal about each pupil, because we must begin with pupils interests as they are, just as we must start teaching reading at any level where we find our pupils.

In order to learn as much as possible about the reading interests of pupils in any class, some authorities suggest the use of interest inventories. One must be cautious about accepting the results at face value unless excellent rapport is established between the teacher and her pupils. Otherwise, pupils may give responses which they think most acceptable to the teacher. Witty<sup>3</sup> suggests an informal interview between the teacher and pupils, usually guided by questions. In practice, this step requires considerably more time, but might be used to supplement a questionnaire.

The real test of children's reading interests comes when books or magazines, at their appropriate levels, are made available to them. If accurate information concerning interest has been secured, and good books located, the child and the book should immediately become inseparable. In practice, it is not that simple. Hence, one must offer a number of choices, accept children's refusals of books with a casual question which will reveal why it is not liked, and try again. This process is time-consuming but definitely rewarding. At present, there is no evidence that we may expect to find a short-cut.

Many teachers today are concerned because of the wide spread interest of

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<sup>3</sup>Paul Witty, "Improving Reading Interests and Independent Reading", in *Promoting Maximal Reading Growth Among Able Learners*, p. 141. Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 81. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.



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pupils in comic magazines. It is obvious that unless we can find the "right" book for each child, this trend will continue. The librarian is the teacher's greatest resource person, and together, they usually can be successful.

### Developing Interests

Once we have discovered each pupil's reading interest, we will find a range as wide as that of their reading achievement. Certain pupils may be willing to read only a single type of book, or read only books about one topic, or only those written by one author. It is necessary to lead them to closely allied or similar types of books. We cannot be content merely to satisfy the current interests, but we must be constantly alert to promoting

growth in this aspect of reading. As teachers and pupils share with each other the best parts of books, new interests may be developed.

For all children, it is the responsibility of each teacher to cultivate and encourage reading interests which are appropriate for the child's level of general maturity. Interests should expand with age, and in certain areas, they should be intensified.

### Concluding Statement

Research has shown us that children's interests change with age, and become increasingly complex and divergent. After the primary grades, boys' and girls' interests tend to separate, although girls will continue to read some boys' books.

*(Please turn to page 191)*

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## WHAT OTHER PERIODICALS ARE SAYING ABOUT READING

MURIEL POTTER

MICHIGAN STATE NORMAL COLLEGE

"Children and TV—A Fifth Report."  
Paul Witty. *Elementary English*, October, 1954.

Only a small portion of this article deals with the effects of televiewing on reading, but in summary, the average amount of reading done by children has not altered in the last two or three years; although some children read more than before the advent of a TV set into the home, more than one-third of pupils read less than they did before TV.

"Reading Abilities of Bright and Dull Children of Comparable Mental Ages." Emery P. Bliesmer. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, October, 1954.

This study is one that has been needed for a long time, because mental age is used as the criterion for expectation of school achievement. Bright children in third and fourth grade (and ten years of age or younger) were paired for mental age with junior high school pupils (fourteen years or older) by means of the Stanford Binet Scale, Form L. The range of mental ages was ten years and eight months to twelve years and six months. Tests were selected to obtain scores for these children on a number of reading skills as well as on reading rate and listening comprehension.

In almost every reading skill the scores were in favor of the young, bright children. The experimenter concludes that the same performance on reading activities involving complex comprehension abilities should not be expected of dull and bright children of equal mental ages. This supports the experience of teachers who have found it difficult to bring dull children "up to" the reading age levels indicated by their mental age scores.

"Unsolved Problems in Reading: A Symposium—I." E. A. Betts, E. W. Dolch, A. I. Gates and D. H. Russell. *Elementary English*, October 1954.

Each of these specialists in the field of teaching reading stresses an area which especially interests him. Dr. Betts discusses gains in teaching methods and in understanding the nature of the reading process. He also provides a list of problems for which there are as yet no answers from research.

Dr. Dolch discusses the possible effects of teacher personality on the effectiveness of methods of teaching reading. He points up the importance of observing pupil, teacher, parent, and group as "variable elements" in the total situation of the child learning to read in school. He offers the formula "teacher-material-method-pupil"

for observing the total situation, and urges attention to the "variable elements" so that allowance and adjustment can be made in the teaching situation.

Dr. Gates suggests that more attention should be given to helping children to teach themselves or to learn independently. He points out that some children learn to read at four or earlier, that they enjoy reading and that they are generally self-taught or nearly so. His article continues a number of statements that challenge the present point of view on the age for beginning reading.

Dr. Russell lists a number of unsolved problems in the field of the effect of reading on personality, and of the effect of personality on compre-

hension of material read. He believes that we must now examine the influence of reading on thinking and character.

"Unsolved Problems in Reading: A Symposium-II." A. J. Harris, Ruth Strang, Paul Witty, and Gerald Yoakam. *Elementary English*, November, 1954.

Dr. Harris is particularly concerned with finding relationships between personality factors and reading disability. He points out that unfavorable family conditions were found by Robinson to be one of the two most frequently occurring causal elements in her study of reading failure. He offers the suggestion that there are several different kinds of emotional blocking found

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among poor readers, and that research can perhaps make clearer the relationship between particular patterns of blocking and reading disability.

Dr. Strang discusses problems related to reading programs, instruction, materials for teaching reading, and the development of additional informal tests. She includes in her paper mention of the integration of the reading and language arts programs at all grade levels, and raises two questions of vital importance for the future of school reading programs:—(1) How convince the school board of the need for a reading specialist in the school, the school system or the county? (2) How present the reading specialist as a resource person for teachers, not merely a person to teach the poorest readers? (*Programs using the reading specialist have been known to stand or fail on the cooperation and understanding of the teachers in such a program, and guideposts are sorely needed. See "All Grades Concentrate on Reading" by Mollie Barrington, in The Nation's Schools, September 1954, for a description of a successful program using the reading consultant in this way.*)

Dr. Witty analyzes problems of needed research in reading, stressing the relationship between reading and the interest factor, and also children's developmental needs, as well as materials and methods. He believes we need new objective tests and evaluative techniques if we are to measure outcomes for the more recently formulated objectives of reading instruction. He points out that most tests of reading comprehension are timed,

making it impossible to interpret the resulting scores diagnostically. He also comments on the varied results of programs for reading acceleration, and suggests in conclusion that reading research be placed on a cooperative basis so that more may be accomplished.

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"A Practical Readability Formula for the Classroom Teacher in the Primary Grades." L. R. Wheeler and E. H. Smith. *Elementary English*, November 1954.

The evaluation of difficulty of primary materials for some years lagged behind work on materials of intermediate grade level or above. The writers of this article describe their formula for evaluating the difficulty of primary materials in such a way as to make its use simple and convenient. Since teachers badly need to be able to evaluate the difficulty levels of materials other than basal readers used in primary reading, they can give most effective guidance by the use of a readability formula. It can be of special service in the evaluation of text materials which tend to have vocabulary extending beyond the grade level for which they are designated.

The formula is given in eight simple steps and an illustration of its use is provided. Emphasis is placed especially on length of sentences and on the proportion of polysyllabic words, two elements in readability currently being stressed. The writers wisely remind users that formula results usually indicate the *instructional level*, not the level for independent reading.

"Amplifying and Simplifying Instructional Materials: Effect on Comprehension." Mary C. Serra. *Elementary School Journal*, October 1954.

This article reviews the results of several studies testing the effect of experimentally lowering the difficulty level of textbook materials. Mary C. Wilson showed that amplifying (expanding by adding explanation to the original unchanged text) textbook materials made comprehension easier, but that difficult materials were also difficult because the concepts in the material did not simplify with expansion. However, reducing the number of concepts per page increased comprehension.

Karl F. Nolte found that simplifying vocabulary alone is not an adequate basis for simplifying reading materials. Semantic variations of words must also be considered in simplification, and difficulty of the concepts involved is an important factor in comprehension.

H. Y. McClusky found that if concepts are well presented, informational reading material in digest form is useful, and there is little difference in value for university students between reading the original and reading the digest.

F. P. Robinson used legal documents, changing the material to include only familiar words, but not changing the language structure. He too found that simplification of vocabulary alone failed to increase comprehension, and concluded that language structure was also a difficulty factor.

Two different studies, by A. F. Baker and Lois K. Clarke, carried on with students in primary and intermediate grades, again demonstrated that substituting "easy" words for "difficult" ones did not increase comprehension, but Baker found also that comprehension tended to increase when language structure was simplified. In a study of sixth grade children's reading by M. B. Jenson and Mable Schrod, simplification of both sentence structure and vocabulary were employed, and the groups reading the "easiest" form of the selections made the highest scores.

The effect of punctuation on reading difficulty level has been insufficiently studied to warrant conclusions, but one study by E. A. Hanson indicates that commas between unmodified members of series, between coordinate clauses, and between non-restrictive clauses do not aid in comprehension.

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"Meeting Children's Reading Needs in the Middle Grades: A Preliminary Report." Cecil Floyd. *Elementary School Journal*, October 1954.

This article describes a program set up experimentally by the Joplin, Missouri public school system to meet the needs of children at the many different reading levels to be found in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. After a series of tests to determine reading ability for all the children, a plan was set up for homogeneous grouping cutting across class and grade lines during a basal instruction program in reading. This program used a period of 45 min-

utes each day. In the afternoon there was a 25-minute period daily for a recreation-reading program in the children's own classrooms and by means of teacher guidance each child was enabled to select material to read at his own level. Many new materials were purchased for use by all groups. Parents were informed of the purpose of the program but not of the children's reading scores or how the groups were to be divided. Grades in reading were discontinued during the period of the experiment, and instead, reports were substituted which covered each child's progress in word skills, oral reading, silent reading number of recreational and supplementary books read, and suggestions and remarks by the teacher.

An evaluation two weeks before the end of the semester (the program continued for one semester only) showed individual gains of from a few months to more than two years. Comments from parents and children were appreciative and enthusiastic. More reading was carried on and work in content subjects improved along with reading skill during the period of the experiment. Superior readers were challenged and made gains as well as did retarded readers. The experiment will be continued.

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"Hersey on Reading." Bernard Mehl. *Elementary English*, November, 1954.

Many readers will have seen an article in the May 24, 1954 issue of *Life* called "Why Can't My Child Read?" or alternatively, "Why Stu-

dents Bog Down on the First R." Mr. Mehl discusses and recommends this article, placing special emphasis on Mr. Hersey's criticisms of materials given to young children for reading instruction. He points out that the article several times attacks a misunderstanding of a concept of education rather than the concept itself, and in doing so indicates one reason why there is so much controversy—the discussants often forget to begin by defining their terms. Teachers will find it most interesting to read both the *Life* article (my own students were greatly challenged and wrote an answer which reached the magazine too late for publication, it seems) and Mr. Mehl's comments in order to increase their understanding of the importance of good clear communication between educators and lay people. If communities are to spend the money for good school reading programs, it must be made clear to the people of those communities what are the goals of such programs, and how and why they are planned as they are.

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### **Seven New Councils Are Approved**

Welcome to the following new Councils: Albany City Area Council, East Central Indiana Council, El Dorado Council No. 2, Arkansas; South Eastern State College Council, Oklahoma; Staten Island Council, and Welland-Port Colborne and District Council. The name of the Midwest City Council in Oklahoma has been changed to the Oklahoma Council.

## INTERESTING BOOKS FOR THE READING TEACHER

—BERTHA B. FRIEDMAN—  
QUEENS COLLEGE

CLAUDIA LEWIS, *Writing for Young Children*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954.

This small volume by Claudia Lewis was intended primarily as a book about writing for children, but it is soon evident to the reader that it pushes well beyond these bounds. In her clear, colorful style, Miss Lewis shares her intimate knowledge of children, her understanding and appreciation of their language, and her skill in using such knowledge and understanding as guides to successful writing. It is a book for would-be writers, but it is a book also for teachers, for parents, for all those who would become sensitive to the richness and vitality of children's creative thinking and modes of expression. It is certainly a book to be read by those who select books for young children to read.

Early in this book, Miss Lewis warns the writer that if he is to write for children, he must learn to speak through the senses, for the child's sensory perception is what is vivid and real to him. If the adult is to communicate with a child effectively, it must be through language patterns which reflect the child's own acuteness of sight and hearing and feeling and movement. In the author's own words:

"Whenever the writer can seize upon a phrase of living speech;

whenever he can make us feel the hot sun on our backs, or dampness against the skin, or light and dark around us; whenever he can strike out sounding and rhythmical clinks, snaps, thumps, from the black print letters, children will listen, and will return to listen again" (p. 5).

Through the first four chapters of *Writing for Young Children*, Miss Lewis explores with her readers the spontaneous speech of children, the satisfying patterns of language selected from children's books which are tested favorites, and the responses of more mature students who have looked inward at their own reactions to the physical world and life about them. Again and again one sees sound, rhythm, and form welded into a design which shapes the story content into a dynamic whole.

Because rhythm and form in writing have little meaning apart from content, in the remaining chapters of the book, Miss Lewis emphasizes the necessity for bringing to children ideas which spring from the important material of living. According to the author:

"Children begin almost as soon as they are born to touch the problems, the concerns, the themes that become the mainsprings of our lives: the extension of perspective



and knowledge, with the accompanying search for challenge and change; the building up of skills for mastery and achievement; the pursuit of belief in self, and the finding of direction and support; the winning out of independence from dependence, and the learning where to turn for heroes, values, warmth" (p. 81).

Therefore books which spark the emotions, the curiosity, and the imagination of the child reader in relation to such universal drives and concerns; which communicate with him in graphic, meaningful language will be those which children reaching out will take for their very own.

Claudia Lewis charges the beginning writer with the task of self-under-

standing for "his stories will be meaningful to children to the extent that what he writes is meaningful to himself." The author's integrity in regard to children and books sets the standard for the kind of writing for which she asks. The vigor and urgency with which she sets forth her thinking command the attention of those who see in language a creative art through which children have the opportunity for development. Having once read this book, the reader will never be able to forget completely the charm and vision embodied in it.

Doris F. Holmes  
Department of Education  
Queens College  
Flushing, New York

## GLOBE BOOKS *for improved reading*

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Martha Dallman and Alma Sheridan, *Better Reading in College*. New York: The Roland Press, 1954; Horace Judson, *The Techniques of Reading*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1954.

The above texts are two more in the ever increasing field of books that attempt to help college students and adults improve their comprehension and speed in reading. In the last few years, many books of this type have been published. Both of these books have valuable ideas to present to students and it is probable that if suggestions are followed their reading techniques will improve. It is important to recognize that a highly motivated, concentrated effort on the part of a student to improve a skill such as reading will be effective in most cases. The workbooks here do not recognize or attempt to handle the students with personal difficulties or low motivation. They are skill improvement texts and have value as such but they do not teach for the instructor. They serve as a useful and important adjunct to the classroom situation. The student's functioning in reading is just one aspect of his total development. It is entirely possible to overlook the student because of enthusiasm to teach the skill. However, it is not possible to be effective when one applies techniques in isolation.

The Judson book is called a "self-teaching text work book" but it is doubtful whether students would be able to follow through this material on their own. However, combined with classwork, the book should be

very valuable. This book is divided into two sections—part one, on basic reading techniques; and part two, on the integrated application of basic reading techniques. This is a useful breakdown because it enables the student to practice in specialized areas. It gives hints for improvement in the area of newspaper, natural science, history, social science, law, and business reading. The author recognizes the importance of vocabulary development and practice in the improvement of reading skills in specific areas. The exercises presented here should be considered as a beginning and much more practice would be required to consolidate skills. The book is well integrated and should prove quite successful in helping students improve their reading and comprehension skills. This text offers a number of new devices which may prove useful to students. Sections have been added on the improvement of eye movements in reading through the attempt to reduce eye fixations through the use of mechanical devices.

The Dallman and Sheridan book is also well organized. The emphasis in this book is more on helping the college student. There are sections on how to read college assignments, remembering long selections, and developing skills that will be useful in library and critical reading work. This would probably be less effective for an adult reading workshop and slightly more successful for a college course. The authors have attempted to integrate the student's general course work into the text. This is a valuable device. Frequently students tend to

work on reading improvement in an isolated fashion without attempting application to the important aspects of their actual college assignments.

The book is divided into fifteen chapters covering the important aspects of reading and study improvement. This type of organization makes it very easy to adapt to college semester approach. The title "Better Reading in College" is quite appropriate for this book as the practice and work here is most suited for a college audience.

O. Bernard Leibman  
The Education Clinic  
Queens College  
Flushing, New York

HOMER L. J. CARTER AND DOROTHY J. MCGINNIS, *Learning to Read—A Handbook for Teachers*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1953.

"Learning to Read" is aptly described in its subtitle "A Handbook for Teachers." The contents are presented in a logical sequence beginning with identification of reading problems and why they develop, then listing objectives and materials for their achievement, and lastly outlining developmental and therapeutic procedures every teacher can use. At the end of each chapter the authors have included a set of questions and references which should prove extremely helpful to those looking for a variety of authentic sources providing enlightenment on specific questions. Many experiences and developmental procedures are suggested for all levels beginning with pre-school and continuing through grade twelve and

adulthood. The activities and materials outlined take into consideration that overlapping is both necessary and desirable.

The lists of materials and devices recommended are extensive and provide a wide range of selection. Ten areas have been designated. These are:

1. Materials which can be used in developing a readiness for reading.
2. Materials which can be used in developing word recognition and vocabulary.
3. Materials which the teacher may find helpful in making structural and phonetic analysis.
4. Materials which may prove of value in correcting specific reading errors.
5. Materials which may prove helpful in stimulating an interest in reading activities.
6. Materials which may be of value in increasing comprehension and rate of reading.
7. Materials which may prove helpful in developing work-study habits.
8. Materials which have been classified according to grade and interest levels.
9. Materials reported to be of interest to retarded readers.
10. Materials which can be used in choric or group speaking.

Appropriately and wisely used these lists can be invaluable and time-saving for both beginning and experienced teachers.

Those engaged in teacher training could use the section on the "Developmental Process in Learning to Read" most effectively. Techniques are suggested appropriate to continuous growth and learning. The role of parents and ways in which parents and teachers must come to common understandings and goals are outlined, and approaches suggested that are sympathetic and resourceful. The authors offer a program that bases its procedures on knowledge developed through research in child development in order to help teachers and parents so to work and live with children that learning takes place and the prevention of difficulties is inherent in the growth process. The prevention of dif-

ficulties is often much easier to achieve than to cure.

A non-technical glossary helps make many often-used terms intelligible. The clinical history and school-data blanks should prove helpful to those required to furnish information about the development of children. This book should prove a valuable addition to the professional library of anyone interested in problems of teaching reading, particularly at a time when questions are being raised throughout the country regarding the achievement of reading skills in the elementary schools.

*Madeline S. Levine  
School of Education  
New York University*

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## News of Local Reading Councils

The Gerald A. Yoakam Council, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, held a dinner meeting in December at which the annual election of officers took place. The dinner speaker was the incomparable Bill Martin from the John C. Winston Company. Mr. Martin made a plea for more reading and telling of stories to children as a means of interesting them in reading. He then held the audience spellbound as he told the Irish fairy tale of "The Princess and the Vagabond" and several other stories. Mr. Martin is the author of *Little Squeegy Bug*, *Green Eyed Stallion* and several other books which are very popular with children.

The Western Michigan College Council, Kalamazoo, is a very active

*Local Councils are urged to send news of their meetings and plans for the future to Miss Josephine Tronsberg, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania, who is Local Council Editor.*

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group. In September a workshop in preparation for a reading conference was followed in October by a round-table discussion of the "Aims, Materials and Procedures for the Modern Teacher of Reading." The Reading Demonstration and Conference, conducted by Dr. Emmett A. Betts in November, was attended by more than one thousand people.

The Ottawa Council, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, met in November for panel discussions at the primary, jun-

DR. DONALD L. CLELAND  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER, I.C.I.R.I.  
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ior and senior levels. Miss Margaret Robinson, president of the International Council extended greetings and assisted on the senior panel in the discussion of comprehension in reading, good taste in reading and teaching new Canadians. The primary panel discussed reading readiness, phonics and grouping. The junior panel discussed comprehension, seatwork devices, slow readers, marking reading, and phonics beyond grade two. Mr. Roy A. Kress, Jr., of Temple University, was the guest speaker at the January meeting.

The Brooklyn Reading Council, New York City, New York, used the October issue of *THE READING TEACHER* as the basis for a panel discussion by members of the Council, on "Improving Basic Reading Skills." Dr. Nancy Young, of the Bureau of Curriculum Research, presided. This discussion was followed by a talk on the "Techniques of Story Telling" by Spencer Shaw, librarian, Brooklyn Public Libraries.

The Central New Jersey Council, Plainfield, held a dinner meeting in January at which Mrs. Grace Knoos, reading demonstrator and specialist, sponsored by the Wesleyan University, was the speaker. This meeting was one of a series of demonstrations devoted to the teaching of news and literature in the elementary schools.

The Queensborough Council, New York City, held its December meeting in the afternoon at which time Dr. Albert J. Harris discussed "Current Trends in the Teaching of Reading." Coffee and cakes were served to about one hundred twenty-five teachers.

Long Island Council, Valley Stream, New York, held demonstration classes of reading techniques at their October meeting. Dr. Roma Gans will be the speaker at the February meeting and Dr. Leland Jacobs at a dinner meeting in March.

The new Dallas Council, Dallas, Texas, draws its membership from three school systems and Southern Methodist University. The seventy-two members were recently addressed by Mrs. Dorothy Kendall Bracken, director of S.M.U. Reading Clinic.

The newly organized Albany City Area Reading Council, Albany, New York, held its first meeting in December. Dr. J. Roy Newton, director of the Reading Center, New York State College for Teachers at Albany, addressed the group of 125 persons, including parents, teachers, school administrators, private school representatives and friends on the topic "What Does the Future Hold for A.C.A.R.C.?" The theme for the January meeting, which was followed by a coffee hour, was "Improving Reading in Various Subjects."

The Arizona Council, Tempe, Arizona, met in January to discuss and observe a demonstration of remedial techniques at the junior high school level. Students from Mr. Lee Shaw's classes at Chandler, Arizona, participated in the demonstration under his direction. One of the highlights of the year will be the Council's participation in the annual Reading and Language Arts Conference of Arizona State College. Dr. John J. DeBoer, professor of education at the University of Illinois will be the principal speaker.

## Three Council Meetings To Be Held Soon

Dr. William S. Gray, president-elect and program chairman of ICIRI, has announced three meetings of the Council to be held soon. Two of the conferences will be held in connection with the regional conventions of the A. A. S. A. The third meeting will be held at the time of the annual convention of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in Chicago.

The St. Louis meeting will be held Monday, February 28 at 2:30 p.m., in the Ballroom of Hotel Statler. The theme of the conference is:—Controversial Issue Relating to (1) Development of Word-Perception Skills, (2) Basic Reading Instruction Beyond Primary Grades, and (3) Development of Reading Skills in Curriculum Areas. Speakers and panel members include: A. Sterl Artely, William Kottmeyer, Gertrude Whipple, Helen M. Robinson, Paul Witty, and Ernest Horn.

The Cleveland meeting, scheduled as part of the eastern meeting of the A. A. S. A., will be held, Monday, April 4. For details as to place of meeting, consult the complete program of the convention. The theme of this meeting will be the same as that of the St. Louis meeting, but it will have different speakers. The speakers and panel members are: Dr. Mary Austin, Dr. Ruth Strang, and Dr. William D. Sheldon.

For the first time the Council will be represented at the annual convention of the Association for Supervision

and Curriculum Development. This year the convention meets in Chicago. The reading conference, which will be sponsored by the Chicago Area Reading Council, is scheduled for March 5 at 8:00 p.m. in the North Ballroom of the Conrad-Hilton Hotel. The program for the conference is as follows:

1. The Value of Reading in Meeting Children's Needs—Mrs. Dilla McBean, Director of School Libraries, Chicago.

2. The Relation of Reading to Development in the Language Arts—Dr. Ruth Strickland, School of Education, University of Indiana.

3. Interrelations of Reading and Other Mass Media in Child Development—Paul Witty, School of Education, Northwestern University.

For complete details and possible changes please consult the official programs of the conventions mentioned.

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## Research

*(Continued from page 177)*

Group trends are not reliable indicators of individual interests. Therefore, to stimulate meaningful reading, teachers must study individual interests. The most reliable method of study appears to be informal interview with guiding questions. Good rapport is essential to accurate insights.

After individual interests are identified, it is essential to locate books and magazines which will fit the interest and the reading level of each pupil. But we must not be satisfied with static and narrow reading interests on the part of our pupils. It is our responsibility to devise means for cultivating broad and permanent reading interests on the part of youth, before they leave our schools.



## LOCAL COUNCILS

Albany City Area Council	Kingwood Council, West Virginia
Allentown Council, Pennsylvania	Lancaster Council, Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Appalachian Council, Boone, North Carolina	Leon County Council, Florida
Arizona Council, Tempe, Arizona	Long Island Council, New York
Berks County Council, Reading, Pennsylvania	Magnolia Council, Mississippi
Bronx Council, Bronx, New York	Manhattan Council, New York
Brooklyn Council, Brooklyn, New York	Mesa Reading Council, Arizona
Calhoun County Council, South Carolina	Milwaukee Area Council, Wisconsin
Capital Reading Council No. 5, Washington, D. C.	Mohawk Valley Council No. 3, New York
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Clyde Park Council, Montana	Oklahoma Council, Midwest, Oklahoma
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Dallas Council, Texas	Ottawa, Ontario Council, Canada
East Central Indiana Council	Painesville City Reading Council, Ohio
El Dorado Council No. 1, Arkansas	Queen Anne's Council, Maryland
El Dorado Council No. 2, Arkansas	Queensborough Council, New York
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	Westchester Reading Council, New York
	Western Michigan College Council, Michigan
	Gerald A. Yoakam Council, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Names and addresses of the presidents of the LOCAL COUNCILS may be secured by writing to Dr. Donald L. Cleland, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania.

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